In all Shades

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IN ALL SHADES

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IN ALL SHADES

A Novel

BY

GRANT ALLEN

AUTHOR OF 'BABYLON' 'STRANGE STORIES' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

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IN ALL SHADES

CHAPTER XIII.

A FORTNIGHT after Nora's arrival in Trinidad, Mr. Tom Dupuy, neatly dressed in all his best, called over one evening at Orange Grove for the express purpose of speaking seriously with his pretty cousin. Mr. Tom had been across to see her more than once already, to be sure, and had condescended to observe to many of his acquaintances, on his return from his call, that Uncle Theodore's girl, just come out from England, was really in her way a deuced elegant and attractive creature.

In Mr. Tom's opinion, she would make a devilish fine person to sit at the head of the table at Pimento Valley. 'A man in my position in life wants a handsome woman, you know,' he said, 'to do the honours, and keep up the dignity of the family, and look after the women-servants, and all that sort of thing; so Uncle Theodore and I have arranged beforehand that it would be a very convenient plan if Nora and I were just to go and make a match of it.'

With the object of definitely broaching this preconcerted harmony to his unconscious cousin, Mr. Tom had decked himself in his very smartest coat and trousers, stuck a *gloire de Dijon* rose in his top button-hole, mounted his celebrated grey Mexican pony 'Sambo Gal,' and ridden across to Orange Grove in the cool of the evening.

Nora was sitting by herself with her cup of tea in the little boudoir that opened out on to the terrace garden, with its big bamboos and yuccas and dracæna trees, when Mr. Tom Dupuy was announced by Rosina as waiting to see her.

'Show him in, Rosina,' Nora said with a smile; 'and ask Aunt Clemmy to send up another teacup.—Good-evening, Tom. I'm afraid you'll find it a little dull here, as it happens, this evening, for papa's gone down to Port-o'-Spain on business; so you'll have nobody to talk to you to-night about the prospects of the year's sugar-crop.'

Tom Dupuy seated himself on the ottoman beside her with cousinly liberty. 'Oh, it don't matter a bit, Nora,' he answered with his own peculiar gallantry. 'I don't mind. In fact, I came over on purpose this evening,

Uncle Theodore was out, because I'd got something very particular I wanted to talk over with you in private.'

'In-deed,' Nora answered emphatically. 'I'm surprised to hear it. I assure you, Tom, I'm absolutely ignorant on the subject of cane-culture.'

'Girls brought up in England mostly are,' Tom Dupuy replied with the air of a man who generally makes a great concession. 'They don't appear to feel much interest in sugar, like other people. I suppose in England there's nothing much grown except corn and cattle.—But that wasn't what I came to talk about to-night, Nora. I've got something on my mind that Uncle Theodore and I have been thinking over, and I want to make a proposition to you about it.'

Well, Tom?'

'Well, Nora, you see, it's like this. As you know, Orange Grove is Uncle Theodore's to leave; and after his time, he'll leave it to you, of course; but Pimento Valley's entailed on me; and that being so, Uncle Theodore let's me have it on lease during his lifetime, so that, of course, whatever I spend upon it in the way of permanent improvements is really spent in bettering what's practically as good as my own property.'

'I understand. Quite so.—Have a cup of tea?'

'Thank you.—Well, Pimento Valley, you know, is one of the very best sugar-producing estates in the whole island. I've introduced the patent Browning regulators for the centrifugal process; and I've imported some of these new Indian mongooses that everybody's talking about, to kill off the cane-rats; and

I've got some splendid stock rattoons over from Mauritius; and altogether, a finer or more creditable irrigated estate I don't think you'll find—though it's me that says it—in the island of Trinidad. Why, Nora, at our last boiling, I assure you the greater part of the liquor turned out to be seventeen over proof; while the molasses stood at twenty-nine specific gravity; giving a yield, you know, of something like one hogshead decimal four on the average to the acre of canes under cultivation.'

Nora held up her fan carelessly to smother a yawn. 'I dare say it did, Tom,' she answered with obvious unconcern; 'but, you know, I told you I didn't understand anything on earth about sugar; and you said it wasn't about that that you wanted to talk to me in private this evening.'

'Yes, yes, Nora; you're quite right; it isn't. It's about a far deeper and more interesting subject than sugar that I'm going to speak to you.' (Nora mentally guessed it must be rum.) 'I only mentioned these facts, you see, just to show the sort of yield we're making now at Pimento Valley. A man who does a return like that, of course, must naturally be making a very tidy round little income.'

'I'm awfully glad to hear it, I'm sure, for your sake,' Nora answered unconcernedly.

'I thought you would be, Nora; I was sure you would be. Naturally, it's a matter that touches us both very closely. You see, as you're to inherit Orange Grove, and as I'm to inherit Pimento Valley, Uncle Theodore and I think it would be a great pity that the two old estates—the estates bound up so in-

timately with the name and fame of the fighting Dupuys—should ever be divided or go out of the family. So we've agreed together, Uncle Theodore and I, that I should endeavour to unite them by mutual arrangement.'

'I don't exactly understand,' Nora said, as yet quite unsuspicious of his real meaning.

'Why, you know, Nora, a man can't live upon sugar and rum alone.'

'Certainly not,' Nora interrupted; 'even if he's a confirmed drunkard, it would be quite impossible. He must have something solid occasionally to eat as well.'

'Ah, yes,' Tom said, in a sentimental tone, endeavouring to rise as far as he was able to the height of the occasion. 'And he must have something more than that, too, Nora: he must have sympathy; he must have affection; he must have a companion in life; he

must have somebody, you know, to sit at the head of his table, and to—to—to——'

'To pour out tea for him,' Nora suggested blandly, filling his cup a second time.

Tom reddened a little. It wasn't exactly the idea he wanted, and he began to have a faint undercurrent of suspicion that Nora was quietly laughing at him in her sleeve. 'Ah, well, to pour out tea for him,' he went on, somewhat suspiciously; 'and to share his joys and sorrows, and his hopes and aspirations——'

'About the sugar-crop?' Nora put in once more, with provoking calmness.

'Well, Nora, you may laugh if you like,' Tom said warmly; 'but this is a very serious subject, I can tell you, for both of us. What I mean to say is that Uncle Theodore and I have settled it would be a very good thing

indeed if we two were to get up a match between us.'

'A match between you,' Nora echoed in a puzzled manner—'a match between papa and you, Tom! What at? Billiards? Cricket? Long jumping?'

Tom fairly lost his temper. 'Nonsense, Nora,' he said testily. 'You know as well what I mean as I do. Not a match between Uncle Theodore and me, but a match between you and me—the heir and heiress of Orange Grove and Pimento Valley.'

Nora stared at him with irrepressible laughter twinkling suddenly out of all the corners of her merry little mouth and puckered eyelids. 'Between you and me, Tom,' she repeated incredulously — 'between you and me, did you say? Between you and me now? Why, Tom, do you really

mean this for a sort of an off-hand casual proposal?'

'Oh, you may laugh if you like,' Tom Dupuy replied evasively, at once assuming the defensive, as boors always do by instinct under similar circumstances. 'I know the ways of you girls that have been brought up at highfalutin' schools over in England. You think West Indian gentlemen aren't good enough for you, and you go running after cavalry-officer fellows, or else after some confounded upstart woolly-headed mulatto or other, who comes out from England. I know the ways of you. But you may laugh as you like. I see you don't mean to listen to me now; but you'll have to listen to me in the end; for Uncle Theodore and I have made up our minds about it, and what a Dupuy makes up his mind about, he gener-

ally sticks to, and there's no turning him. So in the end, I know, Nora, you'll have to marry me.'

'You seem to forget,' Nora said haughtily, 'that I too am a Dupuy, as much as you are.'

'Ah, but you're only a woman, and that's very different. I don't mind a bit about your answering me *no* to-day. It seems I've tapped the puncheon a bit too early; that's all: leave the liquor alone, and it'll mature of itself in time in its own cellar. Sooner or later, Nora, you see if you don't marry me.'

'But, Tom,' Nora cried, abashed into seriousness for a moment by his sudden outburst of native vulgarity, 'this is really so unexpected and so ridiculous. We're cousins, you know; I've never thought of you at all in any way except as a cousin. I didn't

mean to be rude to you; but your proposal and your way of putting it took me really so much by surprise.'

'Oh, if that's all you mean,' Tom Dupuy answered, somewhat mollified, 'I don't mind your laughing, no, not tuppence. All I mind is your saying *no* so straight outright to me If you want time to consider——'

'Never!' Nora interrupted quickly in a sharp voice of unswerving firmness.

'Never, Nora? Never? Why never?'

'Because, Tom, I don't care for you; I can't care for you; and I never will care for you. Is that plain enough?'

Tom stroked his chin and looked at her dubiously, as a man looks at an impatient horse of doubtful temper. 'Well,' he said, 'Nora, you're a fine one, you are—a very fine one. I know what this means. I've seen

it before lots of times. You want to marry some woolly-headed brown man. I heard you were awfully thick with some of those people on board the *Severn*. That's what always comes of sending West Indian girls to be educated in England. You'll have to marry me in the end, though, all the same, because of the property. But you just mark my words: if you don't marry me, as sure as fate, you'll finish with marrying a woolly-headed mulatto!'

Nora rose to her full height with offended dignity. 'Tom Dupuy,' she said angrily, 'you insult me! Leave the house, sir, this minute, or I shall go to my bedroom. Get back to your sugar-canes and your centrifugals until you've learned better manners.'

'Upon my word,' Tom said aloud, as if to himself, rising to go, and flicking his boot

carelessly with his riding-whip, 'I admire her all the more when she's in a temper. She's one of your high-steppers, she is. She's a devilish fine girl, too—hanged if she isn't—and, sooner or later, she'll have to marry me.'

Nora swept out of the boudoir without another word, and walked with a stately tread into her own bedroom. But before she got there, the ludicrous side of the thing had once more overcome her, and she flung herself on her bed in uncontrollable fits of childish laughter. 'Oh, Aunt Clemmy,' she cried, 'bring me my tea in here, will you? I really think I shall die of laughing at Mr. Tom there!'

CHAPTER XIV.

For a few days the Hawthorns had plenty of callers—but all gentlemen. Marian did not go down to receive them. Edward saw them by himself in the drawing-room, accepting their excuses with polite incredulity, and dismissing them as soon as possible by a resolutely quiet and taciturn demeanour. Such a singularly silent man as the new judge, everybody said, had never before been known in the district of Westmoreland.

One afternoon, however, when the two Hawthorns were sitting out under the spreading mango-tree in the back-garden, forgetting

their doubts and hesitations in a quiet chat, Thomas came out to inform them duly that two gentlemen and a lady were waiting to see them in the big bare drawing-room. Marian sighed a sigh of profound relief. 'A lady at last,' she said hopefully. 'Perhaps, Edward, they've begun to find out, after all, that they've made some mistake or other. Can—can any wicked person, I wonder, have been spreading around some horrid report about me, that's now discovered to be a mere falsehood?'

'It's incomprehensible,' Edward answered moodily. 'The more I puzzle over it, the less I understand it. But as a lady's called at last, of course, darling, you'd better come in at once and see her.'

They walked together, full of curiosity, into the drawing-room. The two gentlemen

rose simultaneously as they entered. To Marian's surprise, it was Dr. Whitaker and his father; and with them had come—a brown lady.

Marian was unaffectedly glad to see their late travelling companion; but it was certainly a shock to her, unprejudiced as she was, that the very first and only woman who had called upon her in Trinidad should be a mulatto. However, she tried to bear her disappointment bravely, and sat down to do the honours as well as she was able to her unexpected visitors.

'My daughtah!' the elder brown man said ostentatiously, with an expansive wave of his greasy left hand towards the mulatto lady — 'Miss Euphemia Fowell-Buxton Duchess-of-Sutherland Whitaker.'

Marian acknowledged the introduction

with a slight bow, and bit her lip. She stole a look at Dr. Whitaker, and saw at once upon his face an unwonted expression of profound dejection and disappointment.

'An' how do you like Trinidad, Mrs. Hawtorn?' Miss Euphemia asked with a society simper; while Edward began engaging in conversation with the two men. 'You find de excessiveness of de temperature prejudicial to salubrity, after de delicious equability of de English climate?'

'Well,' Marian assented smiling, 'I certainly do find it very hot.'

'Oh, exceedingly,' Miss Euphemia replied, as she mopped her forehead violently with a highly-scented lace-edged cambric pocket-handkerchief. 'De heat is most oppressive, most unendurable. I could wring out me handkerchief, I assure you, Mrs. Hawtorn,

wit de extraordinary profusion of me persp ration.'

'But this is summer, you must remember,' Dr. Whitaker put in nervously, endeavouring in vain to distract attention for the moment from Miss Euphemia's conversational peculiarities. 'In winter, you know, we shall have quite delightful English weather on the hills —quite delightful English weather.'

'Ah, yes,' the father went on with a broad smile. 'In winter, Mrs. Hawtorn, ma'am, you will be glad to drink a glass of rum-and-milk sometimes, I tell you, to warm de blood on dese chilly hilltops.'

The talk went on for a while about such ordinary casual topics; and then at last Miss Euphemia happened to remark, confidentially to Marian, that that very day her cousin, Mr. Septimius Whitaker, had been

married at eleven o'clock down at the cathedral.

'Indeed,' Marian said, with some polite show of interest. 'And did you go to the wedding, Miss Whitaker?'

Miss Euphemia drew herself up with great dignity. She was a good looking, buxom, round-faced, very negro-featured girl, about as dark in complexion as her brother the doctor, but much more decidedly thick-lipped and flat-nosed. 'Oh no,' she said, with every sign of offended prejudice. 'We didn't at all approve of de match me cousin Septimius was unhappily makin'. De lady, I regret to say, was a Sambo.'

'A what?' Marian inquired curiously.

'A Sambo, a Sambo gal,' Miss Euphemia replied in a shrill crescendo.

'Oh, indeed,' Marian assented in a tone

which clearly showed she hadn't the faintest idea of Miss Euphemia's meaning.

'A Sambo,' Mr. Whitaker the elder said, smiling, and coming to her rescue—'a Sambo, Mrs. Hawtorn, is one of de inferior degrees in de classified scale and hierarchy of colour. De offspring of an African and a white man is a mulatto—dat, madam, is my complexion. De offspring of a mulatto and a white man is a quadroon—dat is de grade immediately superior. But de offspring of a mulatto and a negress is a Sambo—dat is de class just beneat' us. De cause of complaint alleged by de family against our nephew Septimius is dis—dat bein' himself a mulatto—de very fust remove from de pure-blooded white man—he has chosen to ally himself in marriage wit a Sambo gal—de second and inferior remove in de same progression. De family

feels dat in dis course Septimius has toroughly and irremediably disgraced himself.'

'And for dat reason,' added Miss Euphemia with stately coldness, 'none of de ladies in de brown society of Trinidad have been present at dis morning's ceremony. De gentlemen went, but de ladies didn't.'

'It seems to me,' Dr. Whitaker said, in a pained and humiliated tone, 'that we oughtn't to be making these absurd distinctions of minute hue between ourselves, but ought rather to be trying our best to break down the whole barrier of time-honoured prejudice by which the coloured race, as a race, is so surrounded. —Don't you agree with me, Mr. Hawthorn?'

'Pho!' Miss Euphemia exclaimed, with evident disgust. 'Just listen to Wilberforce! He has no proper pride in his family or in his

colour. He would go and shake hands wit any vulgar, dirty, nigger woman, I believe, as black as de poker; his ideas are so common!—Wilberforce, I declare, I's quite ashamed of you!'

Dr. Whitaker played nervously with the knob of his walking-stick. 'I feel sure, Euphemia,' he said at last, 'these petty discriminations between shade and shade are the true disgrace and ruin of our brown people. In despising one another, or boasting over one another, for our extra fraction or so of white blood, we are implicitly admitting in principle the claim of white people to look down upon all of us impartially as inferior creatures.—Don't you think so, Mr. Hawthorn?'

'I quite agree with you,' Edward answered warmly. 'The principle's obvious.'

Dr. Whitaker looked pleased and flattered. Edward stole a glance at Marian, and neither could resist a faint smile at Miss Euphemia's prejudices of colour, in spite of their pressing doubts and preoccupations. And yet, they didn't even then begin to perceive the true meaning of the situation. They had not long to wait, however, for before the Whitakers rose to take their departure, Thomas came in with a couple of cards to announce Mr. Theodore Dupuy, and his nephew, Mr. Tom Dupuy, of Pimento Valley.

The Whitakers went off shortly, Miss Euphemia especially in very high spirits, because Mrs. Hawthorn had shaken hands in the most cordial manner with her, before the face of the two white men. Edward and Marian would fain have refused to see the Dupuys, as they hadn't thought fit to bring

even Nora with them; and at that last mysterious insult—a dagger to her heart—the tears came up irresistibly to poor wearied Marian's swimming eyelids. But Thomas had brought the visitors in before the Whitakers rose to go, and so there was nothing left but to get through the interview somehow, with what grace they could manage to muster.

'We had hoped to see Nora long before this,' Edward Hawthorn said pointedly to Mr. Dupuy—after a few preliminary polite inanities—half hoping thus to bring things at last to a positive crisis. 'My wife and she were school-girls together, you know, and we saw so much of one another on the way out. We have been quite looking forward to her paying us a visit.'

Mr. Dupuy drew himself up very stiffly, and answered in a tone of the chilliest order:

'I don't know to whom you can be alluding, sir, when you speak of "Nora;" but if you refer to my daughter, Miss Dupuy, I regret to say she is suffering just at present from—ur —a severe indisposition, which unfortunately prevents her from paying a call on Mrs. Hawthorn.'

Edward coughed an angry little cough, which Marian saw at once meant a fixed determination to pursue the matter to the bitter end. 'Miss Dupuy herself requested me to call her Nora,' he said, 'on our journey over, during which we naturally became very intimate, as she was put in charge of my wife at Southampton, by her aunt in England. If she had not done so, I should never have dreamt of addressing her, or speaking of her, by her Christian name. As she did do so, however, I shall take the liberty of continuing

to call her by that name, until I receive a request to desist from her own lips. We have long been expecting a call, I repeat, Mr. Dupuy, from your daughter Nora.'

'Sir!' Mr. Dupuy exclaimed angrily; the blood of the fighting Dupuys was boiling up now savagely within him.

'We have been expecting her,' Edward Hawthorn repeated firmly; 'and I insist upon knowing the reason why you have not brought her with you.'

'I have already said, sir,' Mr. Dupuy answered, rising and growing purple in the face, 'that my daughter is suffering from a severe indisposition.'

'And I refuse,' Edward replied, in his sternest tone, rising also, 'to accept that flimsy excuse—in short, to call it by its proper name, that transparent falsehood. If you

do not tell me the true reason at once, much as I respect and like Miss Dupuy, I shall have to ask you, sir, to leave my house immediately.'

A light seemed to burst suddenly upon the passionate planter, which altered his face curiously, by gradual changes, from livid blue to bright scarlet. The corners of his mouth began to go up sideways in a solemnly ludicrous fashion: the crow's feet about his eyes first relaxed and then tightened deeply; his whole big body seemed to be inwardly shaken by a kind of suppressed impalpable laughter. 'Why, Tom,' he exclaimed, turning with a curious half-comical look to his wondering nephew, 'do you know—upon my word—I really believe—no, it can't be possible—but I really believe—they don't even now know anything at all about it.'

'Explain yourself,' Edward said sternly, placing himself between Mr. Dupuy and the door, as if on purpose to bar the passage outward.

'If you really don't know about it,' Mr. Dupuy said slowly, with an unusual burst of generosity for him, 'why, then, I admit, the insult to Miss Dupuy is—is—is less deliberately intentional than I at first sight imagined. But no, no: you *must* know all about it already. You can't still remain in ignorance. It's impossible, quite impossible.'

'Explain,' Edward reiterated inexorably.

'You compel me?'

'I compel you.'

'You'd better not; you won't like it.'

'I insist upon it.'

'Well, really, since you make a point of it —but there, you've been brought up like

a gentleman, Mr. Hawthorn, and you've married a wife who, as I learn from my daughter, is well connected, and has been brought up like a lady; and I don't want to hurt your feelings needlessly. I can understand that under such circumstances——'

'Explain. Say what you have to say; I can endure it.'

'Tom!' Mr. Dupuy murmured imploringly, turning to his nephew. After all, the elder man was something of a gentleman; he shrank from speaking out that horrid secret.

'Well, you see, Mr. Hawthorn,' Tom Dupuy went on, taking up the parable with a sardonic smile—for he had no such scruples—'my uncle naturally felt that with a man of *your colour*——' He paused significantly.

Edward Hawthorn's colour at that parti-

cular moment was vivid crimson. The next instant it was marble white. 'A man of my colour!' he exclaimed, drawing back in astonishment, not unmingled with horror, and flinging up his arms wildly—'a man of my colour! For Heaven's sake, sir, what, in the name of goodness, do you mean by a man of my colour?'

'Why, of course,' Tom Dupuy replied maliciously and coolly, 'seeing that you're a brown man yourself, and that your father and mother were brown people before you, naturally, my uncle——'

Marian burst forth into a little cry of intense excitement. It wasn't horror; it wasn't anger; it wasn't disappointment: it was simply relief from the long agony of that endless, horrible suspense.

'We can bear it all, Edward,' she cried

aloud cheerfully, almost joyously—'we can bear it all! My darling, my darling, it is nothing, nothing, nothing!'

And regardless of the two men, who waited yet, cynical and silent, watching the effect of their unexpected thunderbolt, the poor young wife flung her arms wildly around her newly wedded husband, and smothered him in a perfect torrent of passionate kisses.

But as for Edward, he stood there still, as white, as cold, and as motionless as a statue.

CHAPTER XV.

'WE'D better go, Tom,' Mr. Dupuy said, almost pitying them. 'Upon my soul, it's perfectly true; they neither of them knew a word about it.'

'No, by Jove, they didn't,' Tom Dupuy answered with a sneer, as he walked out into the piazza.—'What a splendid facer, though, it was, Uncle Theodore, for a confounded upstart nigger of a brown man.—But, I say,' as they passed out of the piazza and mounted their horses once more by the steps—for they were riding—'did you ever see anything more disgusting in your life than that woman there

—a real white woman, and a born lady, Nora tells me—slobbering over and hugging that great, ugly, hulking coloured fellow!'

'He's white enough to look at,' Mr. Dupuy said reflectively. 'Poor soul, she married him without knowing anything about it. It'll be a terrible blow for her, I expect, finding out, now she's tied to him irrevocably, that he's nothing more than a common brown man.'

'She ought to be allowed to get a divorce,' Tom Dupuy exclaimed warmly. 'By George, it's preposterous to think that a born lady, and the daughter of a General Somebody over in England, should be tethered for life to a creature of that sort, whom she's married under what's as good as false pretences!'

Meanwhile, the unhappy woman who had

thus secured the high prize of Mr. Tom Dupuy's distinguished compassion was sitting on the sofa in the big bare drawing-room, holding her husband's hand tenderly in hers and soothing him gently by murmuring every now and then in a soft undertone: 'My darling, my darling, I shall love you for ever. How glad we are to know that, after all, it's nothing, nothing.'

Edward's stupor lasted for many minutes; not so much because he was deeply hurt or horrified, for there wasn't much at bottom to horrify him, but simply because he was stunned by the pure novelty and strangeness of that curious situation. A brown man—a brown man! It was too extraordinary! He could hardly awake himself from the one pervading thought that absorbed and possessed for the moment his whole nature. At

last, however, he awoke himself slowly. After all, how little it was, compared with their worst fears and anticipations! 'Thomas,' he cried to the negro butler, 'bring round our horses as quick as you can saddle them. —Darling, darling, we must ride up to Agualta this moment, and speak about it all to my father and mother.'

In Trinidad, everybody rides. Indeed, there is no other way of getting about from place to place among the mountains, for carriage-roads are there unknown, and only narrow winding horse-paths climb slowly round the interminable peaks and gullies. The Hawthorns' own house was on the plains just at the foot of the hills; but Agualta and most of the other surrounding houses were up high among the cooler mountains. So the very first thing Marian and Edward

had had to do on reaching the island was to provide themselves with a couple of saddle-horses, which they did during their first week's stay at Agualta. In five minutes the horses were at the door; and Marian, having rapidly slipped on her habit, mounted her pony and proceeded to follow her agitated husband up the slender thread of mountain-road that led tortuously to his father's house. They rode along in single file, as one always must on these narrow, ledge-like, West Indian bridle-paths, and in perfect silence. At first, indeed, Marian tried to throw out a few casual remarks about the scenery and the tree-ferns, to look as if the disclosure was to her less than nothing—as, indeed, but for Edward's sake, was actually the case—but her husband was too much wrapped up in his own bitter thoughts to answer her by more

than single monosyllables. Not that he spoke unkindly or angrily; on the contrary, his tenderness was profounder than ever, for he knew now to what sort of life he had exposed Marian; but he had no heart just then for talking of any sort; and he felt that until he understood the whole matter more perfectly, words were useless to explain the situation.

As for Marian, one thought mainly possessed her: had even Nora, too, turned against them and forsaken them?

Old Mr. Hawthorn met them anxiously on the terrace of Agualta. He saw at once, by their pale and troubled faces, that they now knew at least part of the truth. 'Well, my boy,' he said, taking Edward's hand in his with regretful gentleness, 'so you have found out the curse that hangs over us?'

'In part, at least,' Edward answered, dis-

mounting; and he proceeded to pour forth into his father's pitying and sympathetic ear the whole story of their stormy interview with the two Dupuys. 'What can they mean,' he asked at last, drawing himself up proudly, 'by calling such people as you and me "brown men," father?'

The question, as he asked it that moment, in the full sunshine of Agualta Terrace, did indeed seem a very absurd one. Two more perfect specimens of the fair-haired, blue-eyed, pinky-white-skinned Anglo-Saxon type it would have been extremely difficult to discover even in the very heart of England itself, than the father and son who thus faced one another. But old Mr. Hawthorn shook his handsome grey old head solemnly and mournfully. 'It's quite true, my boy,' he answered with a painful sigh—'quite true,

every word of it. In the eyes of all Trinidad, of all the West Indies, you and I are in fact coloured people.'

'But, father, dear father,' Marian said pleadingly, 'just look at Edward! There isn't a sign or a mark on him anywhere of anything but the purest English blood! Just look at him, father; how can it be possible?'—and she took up, half unconsciously, his hand—that usual last tell-tale of African descent, but in Edward Hawthorn's case stainless and white as pure wax. 'Surely you don't mean to tell me,' she said, kissing it with wifely tenderness, 'there is negro blood—the least, the tiniest fraction, in dear Edward!'

'Listen to me, dearest,' the old man said, drawing Marian closer to his side with a fatherly gesture. 'My father was a white man. Mary's father was a white man. Our

grandfathers on both sides were pure white, and our grandmothers on one side were white also. All our ancestors in the fourth degree were white, save only one—fifteen whites to one coloured out of sixteen quarters—and that one was a mulatto in either line—Mary's and my great-great-grandmother. In England, or any other country of Europe, we should be white—as white as you are. But such external and apparent whiteness isn't enough by any means for our West Indian prejudices. As long as you have the remotest taint or reminiscence of black blood about you in any way—as long as it can be shown, by tracing your pedigree pitilessly to its fountain-head, that any one of your ancestors was of African origin—then, by all established West Indian reckoning, you are a coloured man, an outcast, a pariah.—You have married

a coloured man, Marian; and your children and your grandchildren to the latest generations will all of them for ever be coloured also.'

'How cruel—how wicked—how abominable!' Marian cried, flushed and red with sudden indignation. 'How unjust so to follow the merest shadow or suspicion of negro blood age after age to one's children's children!'

'And how far more unjust still,' Edward exclaimed with passionate fervour, 'ever so to judge of any man not by what he is in himself, but by the mere accident of the race or blood from which he is descended!'

Marian blushed again with still deeper colour; she felt in her heart that Edward's indignation went further than hers, down to the very root and ground of the whole matter.

'But, O father,' she began again after a slight pause, clinging passionately both to her husband and to Mr. Hawthorn, 'are they going to visit this crime of birth even on a man of Edward's character and Edward's position?'

'Not on him only,' the old man whispered with infinite tenderness—'not on him only, my daughter, my dear daughter—not on him only, but on you—on you, who are one of themselves, an English lady, a true white woman of pure and spotless lineage. You have broken their utmost and sacredest law of race; you have married a coloured man! They will punish you for it cruelly and relentlessly. Though you did it, as he did it, in utter ignorance, they will punish you for it cruelly; and that's the very bitterest drop in all our bitter cup of ignominy and humiliation.'

There was a moment's silence, and then Edward cried to him aloud : 'Father, father, you ought to have told me of this earlier!'

His father drew back at the word as though one had stung him. 'My boy,' he answered tremulously, 'how can you ever reproach me with that? You at least should be the last to reproach me. I sent you to England, and I meant to keep you there. In England, this disgrace would have been nothing—less than nothing. Nobody would ever have known of it, or if they knew of it, minded it in any way. Why should I trouble you with a mere foolish fact of family history utterly unimportant to you over in England? I tried my hardest to prevent you from coming here ; I tried to send you back at once when you first came. But do you wonder, now, I shrank from telling you the

ban that lies upon all of us here? And do you blame me for trying to spare you the misery I myself and your dear mother have endured without complaining for our whole lifetime?'

'Father, father,' Edward cried again, 'I was wrong; I was ungrateful. You have done it all in kindness. Forgive me—forgive me!'

'There is nothing to forgive, my boy—nothing to forgive, Edward. And now, of course, you will go back to England!'

Edward answered quickly, 'Yes, yes, father; they have conquered—they have conquered—I shall go back to England; and you, too, shall come with me. If it were for my own sake alone, I would stop here even so, and fight it out with them to the end till I gained the victory. But I can't

expose Marian—dear, gently nurtured, tender Marian—to the gibes and scorn of these ill-mannered planter people. She shall never again submit to the insult and contumely she has had to endure this morning.—No, no, Marian, darling, we shall go back to England —back to England—back to England!'

'And why, father,' Marian asked, looking up at him suddenly, 'didn't you yourself leave the country long ago? Why didn't you go where you could mix on equal terms with your natural equals? Why have you stood so long this horrible, wicked, abominable injustice?'

The old man straightened himself up, and fire flashed from his eyes like an old lion's as he answered proudly: 'For Edward—for Edward! First of all, I stopped here and worked to enable me to bring up my boy

where his talents would have the fullest scope —in free England. Next, when I had grown rich and prosperous here at Agualta, I stopped on because I wouldn't be beaten in the battle and driven out of the country by the party of injustice and social intolerance. I wouldn't yield to them; I wouldn't give way to them; I wouldn't turn my back upon the baffled and defeated clique of slave-owners, because, though my father was an English officer, my mother was a slave, Marian!'

He looked so grand and noble an old man as he uttered simply and unaffectedly those last few words—the pathetic epitaph of a terrible dead and buried wrong, still surviving in its remote effects—that Marian threw her arms around his neck passionately, and kissed him with one fervent kiss of love

and admiration, almost as tenderly as she had kissed Edward himself in the heat of the first strange discovery.

'Edward,' she cried, with resolute enthusiasm, 'we will not go home! We will not return to England. We, too, will stay and fight out the cruel battle against this wicked prejudice. We will do as your father has done. I love him for it—I honour him for it! To me it's less than nothing, my darling, my darling, that you should seem to have some small taint by birth in the eyes of these miserable, little, outlying islanders. To me, it's less than nothing that they should dare to look down upon you, and to set themselves up against you—you, so great, so learned, so good, so infinitely nobler than them, and better than them in every way! Who are they, the wretched, ignorant, out-of-the-way

creatures, that they venture to set themselves up as our superiors? I will not yield, either. I'm my father's daughter, and I won't give way to them. Edward, Edward, darling Edward, we will stop here still, we will stop here and defeat them!'

'My darling,' Edward answered, kissing her forehead tenderly, 'you don't know what you say; you don't realise what it would be like for us to live here. I can't expose you to so much misery and awkwardness. It would be wrong of me—unmanly of me—cowardly of me—to let my wife be constantly met with such abominable, undeserved insult!'

'Cowardly! Edward,' Marian cried, stamping her pretty little foot upon the ground impatiently with womanly emphasis, 'cowardly—cowardly! The cowardice is all

the other way, I fancy. I'm not ashamed of my husband, here or anywhere. I love you; I adore you; I admire you; I respect you. But I can never again respect you so much if you run away, even for my sake, from this unworthy prejudice. I don't want to live here always, for ever: God forbid. I hate and detest it. But I shall stop here a year—two years—three years, if I like, just to show the hateful creatures I love you and admire you, and I'm not afraid of them!'

'No, no, my child,' old Mr. Hawthorn murmured tenderly, smoothing her forehead; 'this is no home for you, Marian. Go back to England—go back to England!'

Marian turned to him with feverish energy. 'Father,' she cried, 'dear, good,

kind, gentle, loving father! You've taught me better yourself; your own words have taught me better. I won't give way to them; I'll stop in the land where you have stopped, and I'll show them I'm not ashamed of you or of Edward either! Ashamed! I'm only ashamed to say the word. What is there in either of you for a woman not to be proud of with all the deepest and holiest pride in her whole nature!'

'My darling, my darling,' Edward answered thoughtfully, 'we shall have to think and talk more with one another about this wretched, miserable business.'

CHAPTER XVI.

The very next morning, as Edward and Marian were still loitering over the mangoes and bananas at eleven o'clock breakfast—the West Indies keep continental hours—they were surprised and pleased by hearing a pony's tramp cease suddenly at the front-door, and Nora Dupuy's well-known voice calling out as cheerily and childishly as ever: 'Marian, Marian! you dear old thing, please send somebody out here at once, to hold my horse for a minute, will you?'

The words fell upon both their ears just then as an oasis in the desert of

isolation from women's society, to which they had been condemned for the last ten days. The tears rose quickly into Marian's eyes at those familiar accents, and she ran out hastily, with arms outstretched, to meet her one remaining girl-acquaintance. 'O Nora, Nora, darling Nora!' she cried, catching the bright little figure lovingly in her arms, as Nora leapt with easy grace from her mountain pony, 'why didn't you come before, my darling? Why did you leave me so long alone, and make us think you had forgotten all about us?'

Nora flung herself passionately upon her friend's neck, and between laughing and crying, kissed her over and over again so many times without speaking, that Marian knew at once in her heart it was all right there at least, and that Nora, for one,

wasn't going to desert them. Then the poor girl, still uncertain whether to cry or laugh, rushed up to Edward and seized his hand with such warmth of friendliness, that Marian half imagined she was going to kiss him fervently on the spot, in her access of emotion. And indeed, in the violence of her feeling, Nora very nearly did fling her arms around Edward Hawthorn, whom she had learned to regard on the way out almost in the light of an adopted brother.

'My darling,' Nora cried vehemently, as soon as she could find space for utterance, 'my pet, my own sweet Marian, you dear old thing, you darling, you sweetheart!—I didn't know about it; they never told me. Papa and Tom have been deceiving me disgracefully: they said you were away up at Agualta, and that you particularly

wished to receive no visitors until you'd got comfortably settled in at your new quarters here at Mulberry. And I said to papa, nonsense; that that didn't apply to me, and that you'd be delighted to see me wherever and whenever I chose to call upon you. And papa said—O Marian, I can't bear to tell you what he said: it's so wicked, so dreadful—papa said that he'd met Mr. Hawthorn—Edward, I mean—and that Edward had told him you didn't wish at present to see me, because—well, because, he said, you thought our circles would be so very different. And I couldn't imagine what he meant, so I asked him. And then he told me—he told me that horrid, wicked, abominable, disgraceful calumny. And I jumped up and said it was a lie—yes, I said a lie, Marian—I

didn't say a story: I said it was a lie, and I didn't believe it. But if it was true—and I don't care myself a bit whether it's true or whether it isn't—I said it was a mean, cowardly, nasty thing to go and rake it up now about two such people as you and Edward, darling. And whether it's true or whether it isn't, Marian, I love you both dearly with all my heart, and I shall always love you; and I don't care a pin who on earth hears me say so.' And then Nora broke down at once into a flood of tears, and flung herself once more with passionate energy on Marian's shoulder.

'Nora darling,' Marian whispered, crying too, 'I'm so glad you've come at last, dearest. I didn't mind any of the rest a bit, because they're nothing to me; it doesn't matter; but when I thought *you* had for-

gotten us and given us up, it made my heart bleed, darling, darling!'

Nora's tears began afresh. 'Why, pet,' she said, 'I've been trying to get away to come and see you every day for the last week; and papa wouldn't let me have the horses; and I didn't know the way; and it was too far to walk; and I didn't know what on earth to do, or how to get to you. But last night papa and Tom came home, —here Nora's face burned violently, and she buried it in her hands to hide her vicarious shame—' and I heard them talking in the piazza; and I couldn't understand it all; but, O Marian, I understood enough to know that they had called upon you here without me, and that they had behaved most abominably, most cruelly, to you and Edward. And I went out to the piazza, as

white as a sheet, Rosina says, and I said: "Papa, you have acted as no gentleman would act; and as for you, Tom Dupuy, I'm heartily ashamed to think you're my own cousin!" and then I went straight up to my bedroom that minute, and haven't said a word to either of them ever since!'

Marian kissed her once more, and pressed the tearful girl tight against her bosom—that sisterly embrace seemed to her now such an unspeakable consolation and comfort. 'And how did you get away this morning, dear?' she asked softly.

'Oh,' Nora exclaimed, with a childish smile and a little cry of triumph, 'I was determined to come, Marian, and so I came here. I got Rosina—that's my maid, such a nice black girl—to get her lover, Isaac Pourtalès, who isn't one of our servants,

you know, to saddle the pony for me; because papa had told our groom I wasn't to have the horses without his orders, or to go to your house if the groom was with me, or else he'd dismiss him. So Isaac Pourtalès, he saddled it for me; and Rosina ran all the way here to show me the road till she got nearly to the last corner; but she wouldn't come on and hold the pony for me, for if she did, she said, de massa would knock de very breff out of her body; and I really believe he would too, Marian, for papa's a dreadful man to deal with when he's in a passion.'

'But won't he be awfully angry with you, darling,' Marian asked, 'for coming here when he told you not to?'

'Of course he will,' Nora replied, drawing herself up and laughing quietly. 'But

I don't care a bit, you know, for all his anger. I'm not going to keep away from a dear old darling like you, and a dear, good, kind fellow like Edward, all for nothing, just to please him. He may storm away as long as he has a mind to; but I tell you what, my dear, he won't prevent me.'

'I don't mind a bit about it now, Nora, since you're come at last to me.'

'Mind it, darling! I should think not! Why on earth should you mind it? It's too preposterous! Why, Marian, whenever I think of it—though I'm a West Indian born myself, and dreadfully prejudiced, and all that wicked sort of thing, you know—it seems to me the most ridiculous nonsense I ever heard of. Just consider what kind of people these are out here in Trinidad, and what kind of people you and Edward are,

and all your friends over in England! There's my cousin, Tom Dupuy, now, for example; what a pretty sort of fellow he is, really. Even if I didn't care a pin for you, I couldn't give way to it; and as it is, I'm going to come here just as often as ever I please, and nobody shall stop me. Papa and Tom are always talking about the fighting Dupuys; but I can tell you they'll find I'm one of the fighting Dupuys too, if they want to fight me about it.—Now, tell me, Marian, doesn't it seem to you yourself the most ridiculous reversal of the natural order of things you ever heard of in all your life, that these people here should pretend to set themselves up as—as being in any way your equals, darling?' And Nora laughed a merry little laugh of pure amusement, so contagious that Edward and Marian joined in it too, for the first time

almost since they came to that dreadful Trinidad.

Companionship and a fresh point of view lighten most things. Nora stopped with the two Hawthorns all that day till nearly dinner-time, talking and laughing with them much as usual after the first necessary explanations; and by five o'clock, Marian and Edward were positively ashamed themselves that they had ever made so much of what grew with thinking on it into so absurdly small and unimportant a matter. 'Upon my word, Marian,' Edward said, as Nora rode away gaily unprotected—she positively wouldn't allow him to accompany her homeward—'I really begin to believe it would be better after all to stop in Trinidad and fight it out bravely as well as we're able for just a year or two.'

'I thought so from the first,' Marian answered courageously; 'and now that Nora has cheered us up a little, I think so a great deal more than ever.'

When Nora reached Orange Grove, Mr. Dupuy stood, black as thunder, waiting to receive her in the piazza. Two negro men-servants were loitering about casually in the doorway.

'Nora,' he said, in a voice of stern displeasure, 'have you been to visit these new nigger people?'

Nora glanced back at him defiantly and haughtily. 'I have not,' she answered with a steady stare. 'I have been calling upon my very dear friends, the District Court Judge and Mrs. Hawthorn, who are both our equals. I am not in the habit of associating with what you choose to call nigger people.

Mr. Dupuy's face grew purple once more. He glanced round quickly at the two men-servants. 'Go to your room, miss,' he said with suppressed rage—'go to your room, and stop there till I send for you!'

'I was going there myself,' Nora answered calmly, without moving a muscle. 'I mean to remain there, and hold no communication with the rest of the family, as long as you choose to apply such unjust and untrue names to my dearest friends and oldest companions.—Rosina, come here, please! Have the kindness to bring me up some dinner to my own boudoir; will you, Rosina?'

CHAPTER XVII.

It was the very next day when the Governor's wife came to call. In any case, Lady Modyford would have had to call on Marian: for etiquette demands, from the head of the colony at least, a strict disregard for distinctions of cuticle, real or imaginary. But Nora Dupuy had seen Lady Modyford that very morning, and had told her all the absurd story of the Hawthorns' social disqualifications. Now, the Governor's wife was a woman of the world, accustomed to many colonial societies, big and small, as well as to the infinitely greater world of London; and she was naturally

moved, at first hearing, rather to amusement than to indignation at the idea of Tom Dupuy setting himself up as the social superior of a fellow of Catherine's and barrister of the Inner Temple. This point of view itself certainly lost nothing from Nora's emphatic way of putting it; for, though Nora had herself a bountiful supply of fine old crusted West Indian prejudices, producible on occasion, and looked down upon 'brown people' of every shade with that peculiarly profound contempt possible only to a descendant of the old vanquished slave-owning oligarchy, yet her personal affection for Marian and Edward was quite strong enough to override all such abstract considerations of invisible colour; and her sense of humour was quite keen enough to make her feel the full ridiculousness of comparing such a man as Edward

Hawthorn with her own loutish sugar-growing cousin. She had lived so long in England, as Tom Dupuy himself would have said, that she had begun to pick up at least some faint tincture of these newfangled, radical, Exeter Hall opinions; in other words, she had acquired a little ballast of common sense and knowledge of life at large to weigh down in part her tolerably large original cargo of colonial prejudices.

But when Nora came to tell Lady Modyford, as far as she knew them, the indignities to which the Hawthorns had already been subjected by the pure blue blood of Trinidad, the Governor's wife began to perceive there was more in it than matter for mere laughter; and she bridled up a little haughtily at the mention of Mr. Tom Dupuy's free-spoken comments, as overheard by Nora on the

Orange Grove piazza. 'Nigger people!' the fat, good-natured, motherly little body echoed, angrily. 'Did he say nigger people, my dear?—What! a daughter of General Ord of the Bengal infantry—why, I came home from Singapore in the same steamer with her mother, the year my father went away from the Straits Settlements to South Australia! Do you mean to say, my dear, they won't call upon her, because she's married a son of that nice old Mr. Hawthorn with the white beard up at Agualta! A perfect gentleman, too! Dear me, how very abominable! You must excuse my saying it, my child, but really you West Indian people do mistake your own little hole and corner for the great world, in a most extraordinary sort of a fashion. Now, confess to me, don't you?'

So the same afternoon, Lady Modyford had

powdered her round, fat, little face, and put on her pretty coquettish French bonnet, and driven round in full state from Government House to Edward Hawthorn's new bungalow in the Westmoreland valleys.

As the carriage with its red-liveried black footmen drove up to the door, Marian's heart sank once more within her: she knew it was the Governor's wife come to call; and she had a vague presentiment in her own mind that the fat little woman inside the carriage would send in her card out of formal politeness, and drive away at once without waiting to see her. But instead of that, Lady Modyford came up the steps with great demureness, and walked into the bare drawing-room, after Marian's rather untidy and quite raw black waiting-maid; and the moment she saw Marian, she stepped up to her very impulsively, and held

out both her hands, and kissed the poor young bride on either cheek with genuine tenderness. 'My dear,' she said, with a motherly tremor in her kind old voice, 'you must forgive me for making myself quite at home with you at once, and not standing upon ceremony in any way; but I knew your mother years ago—she was just like you then—and I know what a lonely thing it is for a newly-married girl to come out to a country like this, quite away from her own people; and I shall be so glad if you'll take Sir Adalbert and me just as we are. We're homely people, and we don't live far away from you; and if you'll run round and see me any time you feel lonely or are in want of anything, why, you know, of course, my dear, we shall be delighted to see you.'

And then, before Marian could wipe away

the tears that rose quickly to her eyes, fat little Lady Modyford had gone off into reminiscences of Singapore and Bombay, and that dear Mrs. Ord, and the baby that died—'Your sister, you know, my dear—the one that was born at Calcutta, and died soon after your dear mamma reached England.—No, of course, my dear; your mamma couldn't know that I was here, because, you see, when she and I came home together—why, that was twenty-two years ago—no, twenty-four, I declare, because Sir Adalbert—he was plain Mr. Modyford then, on three hundred a year, in the Straits Settlements colonial service—didn't propose to me till the next summer, when he came home on leave, you know, just before he was removed to Hong-kong by that horrid Lord Modbury, who was Colonial Secretary in those days, and afterwards died of suppressed gout,

the doctors said, which I call D. T., at his own villa at that delightful Spezzia. So you see I was Kitty Fitzroy at that time, my child; and I dare say your mamma, who's older than me a good bit, of course, never heard about my marrying Sir Adalbert, for we were married very quietly down in Devonshire, where Sir Adalbert's father was rector in a very small parish, on a tiny income; and we started at once for Hong-kong, and spent our honeymoon at Venice—a nasty, damp, uncomfortable place for a wedding tour, I call it, but not nearly so bad as you coming out here straight from the church door almost, Miss Dupuy told me; and Trinidad too, well known to be an unsociable, dead-alive sort of an island. But whenever you like, dear, you must just jump on your horse—you've got horses, of course?—yes, I thought so—and

ride over to Government House, and have a good chat with me and Emily; for, indeed, Mrs. Hawthorn—what's your Christian name? —Marian—ah, very pretty—we should like to see you as often as you choose; and next week, after you've settled down a little, you must really come up and stop some time with us; for I assure you I've quite taken a fancy to you, my dear; and Sir Adalbert, when he saw Mr. Hawthorn, the other day, at the Island Secretary's office, came home quite delighted, and said to me: "Kitty, the young man they've sent out for the new District judge is the very man to keep that something old fool Dupuy in order in future." '

Lady Modyford waited a good deal longer than is usual with a first call, and got very friendly indeed with poor Marian before the end of her visit; for, coarse-grained woman of

the world as she was, her heart warmed not a little towards the friendless young bride who had come out to Trinidad—dull hole, Trinidad, not at all like Singapore, or Mauritius, or Cape Town—to find herself so utterly deserted by all society. And next day, all female Trinidad was talking over five-o'-clock tea about the remarkable fact, learnt indirectly though those unrecognised purveyors of fashionable intelligence, the servants, that that horrid proud Lady Modyford—'who treats you and me, my dear, as if we were the dirt beneath her feet, don't you know, and must call with two footmen and so much grandeur and formality'—had actually kissed that brown man's wife, that's to be the new District judge in Westmoreland, on both cheeks, the very first moment she saw her. Female Trinidad was so inexpressibly shocked

at this disgraceful behaviour in a person officially charged with the maintenance of a high standard of decorum, that it was really half inclined to think it ought to cut Lady Modyford direct on next meeting her. It was restrained from this extreme measure, however, by a wholesome consideration of the fact that Lady Modyford would undoubtedly take the rebuff with unruffled amusement; so it contented itself by merely showing a little coldness to the Governor's wife when it happened to meet her, and refusing to enter into conversation with her on the subject of Marian and Edward Hawthorn.

As for Marian herself, she had a good cry, as soon as Lady Modyford was gone, over this interview also. Kind as the Governor's wife had wished to show herself, and genuinely sympathetic as she had actually been,

Marian couldn't help recognising that there was a certain profound undercurrent of degradation in having to accept the ready sympathy of such a woman at all on such a matter. Anywhere else, Marian would have felt that Lady Modyford, motherly as she was, stood just a grade or two by nature below her; in fact, she felt so there too; but still, she was compelled by circumstances to take the good fat body's consolation and condolence as a sort of favour; while anywhere else she would rather have repelled it as a disagreeable impertinence, or at least as a distasteful interference with her own individuality. It was impossible not to be dimly conscious that coming to Trinidad had made a real difference in her own social position. At home, she had no need for anybody's condescension or anybody's affability; here, she

was forced to recognise the fact that even Lady Modyford was making generous concessions on purpose in her favour. It was galling, but it was inevitable. There is nothing more painful to persons who have always mixed in society on terms of perfect and undoubted equality, than thus to put themselves into false positions, where it is possible for equals, or even for natural inferiors, to seem to patronise them.

Nevertheless, that evening Marian said to Edward very firmly: 'Edward, you must make up your mind to stop in Trinidad. I shall never feel so much confidence again in your real courage if you turn and run from Nora's father. Besides, now Lady Modyford has called, and Nora has been here, I dare say we shall get a little society of our own —people who know too much about the

outer world to be wholly governed by the fads and fancies of Trinidad planters.'

And Edward answered in a somewhat faltering voice: 'Very well, my darling. One's duty lies that way, I know; and if you're strong enough to stand up and face it, why, I must try to face it also.'

And they did face it, with less difficulty even than they at first imagined. Presently, Mrs. Castello came to call, the wife of the Governor's aide-de-camp; a pretty, pleasant, sisterly little woman, who struck up a mutual attachment with Marian almost at first sight, and often dropped in to see them afterwards. Then one or two others of the English officials brought their wives; and before long, when Marian went to stay at Government House, it was clear that in the imported official society at any rate the Hawthorns were

to be at least tolerated. Toleration is a miserable sort of standing for people to submit to; but, in the last resort, it is better than isolation. And as time went on, the toleration grew into friendliness and intimacy in many quarters, though never among the native planter aristocracy. Those noble people, intensely proud of their pure white blood, held themselves entirely aloof with profound dignity. 'Poor souls!' Sir Adalbert Modyford said contemptuously to Captain Castello, 'they forget how little it is to be proud of, and that every small street arab in London could consider himself a gentleman in Trinidad on the very self-same grounds of birth as they do.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

THERE was great excitement in the District Court at Westmoreland one sunny morning, a few days later, for the new judge was to sit and hear an appeal, West Indian fashion, from a magistrate's decision in the case of Delgado *versus* Dupuy. The little courthouse in the low parochial buildings of Westmoreland was crowded with an eager throng of excited negroes. Much buzzing and humming of voices filled the room, for it was noised abroad among the blacks that Mistah Hawtorn, being a brown man born, was likely to curry favour with the buckras—as

brown men will—by giving unjust decisions in their favour against the black men; and this was a very important case for the agricultural negroes, as it affected a question of paying wages for work performed in the Pimento Valley cane-pieces.

Rosina Fleming was there among the crowd; and as Louis Delgado, the appellant in the case, came into court, he paused for a moment to whisper hurriedly a few words to her. 'De med'cine hab effeck like I tell you, Missy Rosina?' he asked in an undertone.

Rosina laughed and showed her white teeth. 'Yes, Mistah Delgado, him hab effeck, sah, same like you tell me. Isaac Pourtalès, him lub me well for true, nowadays.'

'Him gwine to marry you, missy?'

Rosina shook her head. 'No; him can't done dat,' she answered carelessly, as though

it were the most natural thing in the world. 'Him got anudder wife already.'

'Ha! Him got wife ober in Barbadoes?' Delgado muttered. 'Him doan't nebber tell me dat.—Well, Missy Rosy, I want you bring Isaac Pourtalès to me hut dis one day. I want Isaac to help me wit de great an' terrible day ob de Lard. De cup ob de Dupuys is full dis day; an' if de new judge gib decision wrongfully agin me, de Lard will arise soon in all him glory, like him tell de prophets, an' make de victory for him own people.'

'But not hurt de missy?' Rosina inquired anxiously.

'Yah, yah! You is too chupid, Miss Rosy, I tellin' you. You tink when de Lard bare him arm in him wrat, him gwine to turn aside in de day ob vengeance for your missy?

De Dupuys is de Lard's enemy, le-ady, an' he will destroy dem utterly, men and women.'

Before Rosina could find time to reply, there was a sudden stir in the body of the court, and Edward Hawthorn, entering from the private door behind, took his seat upon the judge's bench in hushed silence.

'Delgado *versus* Dupuy, an appeal from a magistrate's order, referred to this court as being under twenty shillings in value.—Who heard the case in the first instance?' Edward inquired.

'Mr. Dupuy of Orange Grove and Mr. Henley,' Tom Dupuy, the defendant, answered quietly.

Edward's forehead puckered up a little. 'You are the defendant, I believe, Mr. Thomas Dupuy?' he said to the young planter with a curious look.

Tom Dupuy nodded acquiescence.

'And the case was heard in the first instance by Mr. Theodore Dupuy of Orange Grove, who, if I am rightly informed, happens to be your own uncle?'

'Rightly informed!' Tom Dupuy sneered half angrily—'rightly informed, indeed! Why, you know he is, of course, as well as I do. Didn't we both call upon you together the other day? I should say, considering what sort of interview we had, you can't already have quite forgotten it!'

Edward winced a little, but answered nothing. He merely allowed the plaintiff to be put in the box, and proceeded to listen carefully to his rambling evidence. It wasn't very easy, even for the sharp, half-Jewish brown barrister who was counsel for the plaintiff, to get anything very clear or de-

finite out of Louis Delgado with his vague rhetoric. Still, by dint of patient listening, Edward Hawthorn was enabled at last to make out the pith and kernel of the old African's excited story. He worked, it seemed, at times on Orange Grove estate, and at times, alternately, at Pimento Valley. The wages on both estates, as frequently happens in such cases, were habitually far in arrears; and Delgado claimed for many days, on which, he asserted, he had been working at Tom Dupuy's cane-pieces; while Tom Dupuy had entered a plea of never indebted, on the ground that no entry appeared in his own book-keeper's account for those dates of Delgado's presence. Mr. Theodore Dupuy had heard the case, and he and a brother-magistrate had at once decided it against Delgado. 'But, I know, sah,' Delgado

said vehemently, looking up to the new judge with a certain defiant air, as of a man who comes prepared for injustice, 'I know I work dem days at Pimento Valley, because I keep book meself, an' put down in him in me own hand all de days I work anywhere.'

'Can you produce the book?' Edward inquired of the excited negro.

'It isn't any use,' Tom Dupuy interrupted angrily. 'I've seen the book myself, and you can't read it. It's all kept in some heathenish African language or other.'

'I must request you, Mr. Dupuy, not to interrupt,' Edward Hawthorn said in his sternest voice. 'Please to remember, I beg of you, that this room is a court of justice.'

'Not much justice here for white men, I expect,' Tom Dupuy muttered to himself in a half-audible undertone. 'The niggers'll have

it all their own way in future, of course, now they've got one of themselves to sit upon the bench for them.'

'Produce the book,' Edward said, turning to Delgado, and restraining his natural anger with some difficulty.

'It doan't no good, sah,' the African answered, with a sigh of despondency, pulling out a greasy account-book from his open bosom, and turning over the pages slowly in moody silence. 'It me own book, dat I hab for me own reference, an' I keep him all in me own handwriting.'

Edward held out his hand commandingly, and took the greasy small volume that the African passed over to him, with some little amusement and surprise. He didn't expect, of course, that he would be able to read it, but he thought at least he ought to see what

sort of accounts the man kept; they would at any rate be interesting, as throwing light upon negro ideas and modes of reckoning. He opened the book the negro gave him and turned it over hastily with a languid curiosity. In a second, a curious change came visibly over his startled face, and he uttered sharply a little sudden cry of unaffected surprise and astonishment. 'Why,' he said in a strangely altered voice, turning once more to the dogged African, who stood there staring at him in stolid indifference, 'what on earth is the meaning of this? This is Arabic—excellent Arabic!'

Rosina Fleming, looking eagerly from in front at the curious characters, saw at once they were the same in type as the writing in the obeah book Delgado had showed her the evening she went to consult him at his hut about Isaac Pourtalès.

Delgado glanced back at the young judge with a face full of rising distrust and latent incredulity. 'You doan't can read it, sah?' he asked suspiciously. 'It African talk. You doan't can read it?'

'Certainly, I can,' Edward answered with a smile. 'It's very beautifully and clearly written, and it's all exceedingly good and accurate Arabic entries.' And he read a word or two of the entries aloud, in proof of his ability to decipher at sight the mysterious characters.

Delgado in turn gave a sudden start; and drawing himself up to his full height, with new-born pride and dignity, he burst forth at once into a few sentences in some strange foreign tongue, deep and guttural, addressed apparently, as Tom Dupuy thought, to the new judge in passionate entreaty.

But in reality the African was asking Edward Hawthorn, earnestly and in the utmost astonishment, whether it was a fact that he could really and truly speak Arabic.

Edward answered him back in a few words, rapidly spoken, in the fluent colloquial Egyptian dialect which he had learnt in London from his Mohammedan teacher, Sheikh Abdullah. It was but a short sentence, but it was quite enough to convince Delgado that he did positively understand the entries in the account-book. 'De Lard be praise!' the African shouted aloud excitedly. 'De new judge, him can read de book I keep for me own reckonin'! De Lard be praise! Him gwine to delibber me.'

'Did ever you see such a farce in your life?' Tom Dupuy whispered in a stage aside to his Uncle Theodore. 'I don't be-

lieve the fellow understands a single word of it; and I'm sure the gibberish they were talking to one another can't possibly be part of any kind of human language even in Africa. And yet, after all, I don't know! The fellow's a nigger himself, and perhaps he may really have learnt from his own people some of their confounded African lingoes. But who on earth would ever have believed, Uncle Theodore, we'd have lived to hear such trash as that talked openly from the very Bench in a Queen's court in the island of Trinidad?'

Edward coloured up again at the few words which he caught accidentally of this ugly monologue; but he only said to the eager African: 'I cannot speak with you here in Arabic, Delgado; here we must use English only.'

'Certainly,' Tom Dupuy suggested aloud —colonial courts are even laxer than English ones. 'We mustn't forget, of course, Mr. Hawthorn, as you said just now, that this room is a court of justice.'

The young judge turned over the book to conceal his chagrin, and examined it carefully. 'What are the dates in dispute?' he asked, turning to the counsel.

Delgado and Tom Dupuy in one breath gave a full list of them. Counsel handed up a little written slip with the various doubtful days entered carefully upon it in ordinary English numbers. Edward ticked them off one by one in Delgado's note-book, quietly to himself, smiling as he did so at the quaint Arabic translations of the Grove of Oranges and the Valley of Pimento. Every one of Delgado's dates was quite accurately

and carefully entered in his own account-book.

When they came to examine Tom Dupuy and his Scotch book-keeper, their account of the whole transaction was far less definite, clear, and consistent. Tom Dupuy, with a certain airy lordly indifference, admitted that his payments were often in arrears, and that his modes of book-keeping were often somewhat rough and ready. He didn't pretend to keep an account personally of every man's labour on his whole estate, he said; he was a gentleman himself, and he left that sort of thing, of course, to his book-keeper's memory. The book-keeper didn't remember that Louis Delgado had worked at Pimento Valley on those particular disputed mornings; though, to be sure, one naturally couldn't be quite certain about it. But if you were going to

begin taking a nigger's word on such a matter against a white man's, why, what possible security against false charges could you give in future to the white planter?

'How often do you post up the entries in that book?' Delgado's counsel asked the book-keeper in cross-examination.

The book-keeper was quite as airy and easy as his master in this matter. 'Weel, whiles I do it at the time,' he answered quietly, 'an' whiles I do it a wee bit later.'

'An' I put him down ebbery evening, de minute I home, sah, in dis note-book,' Delgado shouted eagerly with a fierce gesticulation.

'You must be quiet, please,' Edward said, turning to him. 'You mustn't interrupt the witness or your counsel.'

'Did Delgado work at Pimento Valley

yesterday?' the brown barrister asked, looking up from the books which Tom Dupuy had been forced to produce and hand in, in evidence.

The book-keeper hesitated and smiled a sinister smile. 'He did,' he answered after a moment's brief internal conflict.

'How is it, then, that the day's work isn't entered here already?' the brown barrister went on pitilessly.

The book-keeper shuffled with an uneasy shuffle. 'Ah, weel, I should have entered it on Saturday evening,' he answered evasively.

Edward turned to Delgado's note-book. The last day's work was entered properly in an evidently fresh ink, that of the previous two days looking proportionately blacker and older. There could be very little doubt,

indeed, which of the two posted his books daily with the greater care and accuracy.

He heard the case out patiently and temperately, in spite of Delgado's occasional wild outbursts and Tom Dupuy's constant sneers, and at the end he proceeded to deliver judgment as calmly as he was able, without prejudice. It was a pity that the first case he heard should have been one which common justice compelled him to give against Tom Dupuy, but there was no helping it. 'The court enters judgment for the plaintiff,' he said in a loud clear voice. 'Delgado's books, though unfortunately kept only in Arabic for his own reference, have been very carefully and neatly posted.—Yours, Mr. Dupuy, I regret to say, are extremely careless, inadequate, and inaccurate; and I am also sorry to see that the case was heard

in the first instance by one of your own near relations. Under such circumstances, it would have been far wiser, as well as far more seemly, to avoid all appearance of evil.'

Tom Dupuy grew red and pale by turns as he listened in blank surprise and dismay to this amazing and unprecedented judgment. A black man's word taken in evidence in open court against a white gentleman's! It was too appalling! 'Well, well, Uncle Theodore,' he said bitterly, rising to go, 'I expected as much, though it's hard to believe it. I knew we should never get any decent justice in this court any longer!'

But Delgado stood there, dazed and motionless, gazing with mute wonder at the pale face of the new judge, and debating within himself whether it could be really

true or not that he had gained his case against the powerful Dupuy faction. Not that he understood for a moment the exact meaning of the legal words, 'judgment for the plaintiff;' but he saw at once on Tom Dupuy's face that the white man was positively livid with anger and had been severely reprimanded. 'De Lard be praise!' he ejaculated again, at last. 'De judge is righteous judge, an' lub de black man!' Then he added in a lower and more solemn tone to Rosina Fleming, who stood once more now beside him: 'In de great an' terrible day ob de Lard, missy, de sword ob de Lard an' ob his people will pass ober all de house ob de Hawtorn, as de angel pass ober de children ob Israel in de day when him slay de first-born ob de Egyptian, from de son ob Pharaoh

dat sit upon de trone to de son ob de captive dat languish in de dungeon!'

Edward would have given a great deal just then if Delgado in the moment of his triumph had not used those awkward words, 'Him lub de black man!' But there was no use brooding over it now; so he merely signed with his finger to Delgado, and whispered hastily in his ear as he dismissed the case: 'Come to me this evening in my own room as soon as court is all over; I want to hear from you how and where you learnt Arabic.'

CHAPTER XIX.

When all the other cases had been gradually dismissed — the petty larceny of growing yams; the charge of stealing a pair of young turkeys; the disputed question as to the three-halfpence balance on the account for sweet-potatoes, and so forth *ad infinitum*—Edward made his way, wearied and anxious, into his own room behind the courthouse. Delgado was waiting for him there, and as the judge entered, he rose quickly and uttered a few words of customary salutation in excellent Arabic. Edward Hawthorn observed at once that a strange change seemed to have come

over the ragged old negro in the course of those few hours. He had lost his slouching, half-savage manner, and stood more erect, or bowed in self-respecting obeisance, with a certain obvious consciousness of personal dignity which at once reminded him of Sheikh Abdullah. He noticed, too, that while the man's English was the mere broken Creole language he had learned from the other negroes around him, his Arabic was the pure colloquial classical Arabic of the Cairo ulemas. It was astonishing what a difference this change of tongue made in the tattered old black field-labourer: when he spoke English, he was the mere ordinary plantation negro; when he spoke Arabic, he was the decently educated and perfectly courteous African Moslem.

'You have quite surprised me, Delgado,'

Edward said, still in colloquial Arabic. 'I had no idea there were any Africans in Trinidad who understood the language of the Koran. How did you ever come to learn it?'

The old African bowed graciously, and expanded his hands with a friendly gesture. 'Effendi,' he answered, 'Allah is not wholly without his true followers in any country. Is it not written in your own book that when Elijah, the forerunner of the Prophet, cried in the cave, saying: "I alone am left of the worshippers of Allah," the Lord answered and said unto him in his mercy: "I have left me seven thousand souls in Israel which have not bowed the knee to Baal"? Even so, Allah has his followers left even here among the infidels in Trinidad.'

'Then you are still a Mussulman?' Edward cried in surprise.

The old African rose again from the seat into which Edward had politely motioned him, and folding both his hands reverently in front of him, answered in a profoundly solemn voice: 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet.'

'But I thought—I understood—I was told that you were a teacher and preacher up yonder in the Methodist chapel.'

Delgado shrugged his shoulders with African expressiveness. 'What can I do?' he said, throwing open his hands sideways. 'They have brought me here all the way from the Gold Coast. There is no mosque here, no ulema, no other Moslems. What can I do? I have to do as the other negroes do.—But see!' and he drew something carefully from the folds of his dirty cotton shirt: 'I have brought a Book with

me. I have kept it sacredly all these years. Have you seen it? Do you know it?'

Edward opened the soiled and dog-eared but carefully treasured volume that the negro handed him. He knew it at once. It was a hand-copied Koran. He turned the pages over lightly till he came to the famous chapter of the Seven Treasures; then he began to read aloud a few verses in a clear, easy, Arabic intonation.

Delgado started when he heard the young judge actually reading the sacred volume. 'So you, too, are a Moslem!' he cried excitedly.

Edward smiled. 'No,' he answered; 'I am no Mussulman. But I have learnt Arabic, and I have read the Koran.'

'Mussulman or Christian,' Delgado answered fervently, throwing up his head, 'you

are a servant of Allah. You have given judgment to-day like Daniel the Hebrew, or like Othman Calif, the successor of the Prophet. When the great and terrible day of the Lord arrives, Allah will surely not forget the least among his servants.'

Edward did not understand the hidden meaning of that seemingly conventional pious tag, so he merely answered: 'But you haven't yet told me, remnant of the faithful, how you ever came to learn Arabic.'

Thus encouraged, Delgado loosed the strings of his tongue, and poured forth rapidly with African volubility the whole marvellous story of his life. The son of a petty chieftain on the Guinea coast, he had been sent in his boyhood by his father, a Mohammedan convert, to the native schools for the negroes at Cairo, where he had re-

mained till he was over seventeen years old, and had then returned to his father's principality. There, he had gone out to fight in some small war between two neighbouring negro chieftains, whose events he insisted on detailing to Edward at great length; and having been taken prisoner by the hostile party, he had at last been sold in the bad old days, when a contraband 'ebony-trade' still existed, to a Cuban slaver. The slaver had been captured off Sombrero Rock by an English cruiser, and all the negroes landed at Trinidad. That was the sum and substance of the strangely romantic story told by the old African to the young English barrister in the Westmoreland courthouse. Couched in his childish and ignorant negro English, it would no doubt have sounded ludicrous and puerile; but poured forth in

classical Arabic almost as pure and fluent as Sheikh Abdullah's own, it was brimful of pathos, eloquence, interest, and weirdness. Yet strange and almost incredible as it seemed to Edward's mind, the old African himself apparently regarded it as the most natural and simple concatenation of events that could easily happen to anybody anywhere.

'And how is it,' Edward asked at last, in profound astonishment, lapsing once more into English, 'that you have never tried to get back to Africa?'

Delgado smiled an ugly smile, that showed all his teeth, not pleasantly, but like the teeth of a bulldog snarling. 'Do you tink, sah,' he said sarcastically, 'dat dem fightin' Dupuy is gwine to help a poor black naygur to go back to him own country? Ole-time folk

has proverb: "Mongoose no help cane-rat find de way back to him burrow."'

Edward could hardly believe the sudden transformation. In a single moment, with the change of language, the educated African had vanished utterly, and the plantation negro stood once more undisguised before him. And yet, Edward thought curiously to himself, which, after all, was the truest and most genuine of those two contrasted but united personalities—the free Mussulman, or the cowed and hopeless Trinidad field-labourer? Strange, too, that while this born African could play as he liked at fetichism or Christianity, could do obeah or sing psalms from his English hymn-book, the profoundly penetrating and absorbing creed of Islam was the only one that had sunk deep into the very inmost marrow of his negro

nature. About that fact, Edward could not for a moment have the faintest hesitation. Delgado—Coromantyn or West Indian—was an undoubting Mussulman. Christianity was but a cloak with which he covered himself outwardly, to himself and others; obeah was but an art that he practised in secret for unlawful profit; Islam, the faith most profoundly and intimately adapted to the negro idiosyncrasy, was the creed that had burnt itself into his very being, in spite of all changes of outer circumstance. Not that Delgado believed his Bible the less: with the frank inconsistency of early minds, he held the two incompatible beliefs without the faintest tinge of conscious hypocrisy; just as many of ourselves, though Christian enough in all externals, hold lingering relics of pagan superstitions about horseshoes, and crooked

sixpences, and unlucky days, and the mystic virtues of a carnelian amulet. Every morning he spelt over religiously a chapter in the New Testament; and every night, in the gloom of his hut, he read to himself in hushed awe a few versicles of the holy Koran.

When story and comment were fully finished, the old African rose to go. As he opened the door, Edward held out his hand for the negro to shake. Delgado, now once more the plantation labourer, hesitated for a second, fearing to take it; then at last, drawing himself up to his full height, and instinctively clutching at his loose cotton trousers, as though they had been the flowing white robes of his old half-forgotten Egyptian school-days, he compromised the matter by making a profound salaam, and crying in his clear Arabic gutturals: 'May the blessing of

Allah, the All-wise, the merciful, rest for ever on the effendi, his servant, who has delivered a just judgment!'

In another moment he had glided through the door; and Edward, hardly yet able to realise the strangeness of the situation, was left alone with his own astonishment.

CHAPTER XX.

THREE or four months rolled rapidly away, and the Hawthorns began to feel themselves settling down quietly to their new, strange, and anomalous position in the island of Trinidad. In spite of her father's prohibition, Nora often came around to visit them; and though Mr. Dupuy fought hard against her continuing 'that undesirable acquaintance,' he soon found that Nora, too, had a will of her own, and that she was not to be restrained from anything on which she had once set her mind, by such very simple and easy means as mere prohibition. 'The girl's a

Dupuy to the backbone,' her cousin Tom said to her father more than once, in evident admiration. 'Though she does take up with a lot of coloured trash—which, of course, is very unladylike—by George, sir, when once she sets her heart upon a thing, she does it too, and no mistake about it either.'

Dr. Whitaker was another not infrequent visitor at the Hawthorns' bungalow. He had picked up, as he desired, a gratuitous practice among the poorer negroes; and though it often sorely tried his patience and enthusiasm he found in it at least some relief and respite from the perpetual annoyance and degradation of his uncongenial home-life with his father and Miss Euphemia. His botany, too, gave him another anodyne—something to do to take his mind off the endless incongruity of his settled position. He had decided in

his own mind, almost from the very first day of landing, to undertake a Flora of Trinidad —a new work on all the flowering plants in the rich vegetation of that most luxuriant among tropical islands; and in every minute of leisure time that he could spare from the thankless care of his poor negro patients, he was hard at work among the tangled woods and jungle undergrowth, or else in his own little study at home, in his father's house, collecting, arranging, and comparing the materials for this his great work on the exquisite flowers of his native country. The faithful violin afforded him his third great resource and alleviation. Though Miss Euphemia and her lively friends were scarcely of a sort to appreciate the young doctor's touching and delicate execution, he practised by himself for an hour or two in

his own rooms every evening; and as he did so, he felt that the strings seemed ever to re-echo with one sweet and oft-recurring name —the name of Nora. To be sure, he was a brown man, but even brown men are more or less human. How could he ever dream of falling in love with one of Miss Euphemia's like-minded companions?

He met Nora from time to time in the Hawthorns' drawing-room; there was no other place under the circumstances of Trinidad where he was at all likely ever to meet her. Nora was more frankly kind to him now than formerly; she felt that to be cool or indifferent towards him before Edward and Marian might seem remotely like an indirect slight upon their own position. One afternoon he met her there accidentally, and she asked him, with polite interest, how his

work on the flowers of Trinidad was getting on.

The young doctor cast down his eyes and answered timidly that he had collected an immense number of specimens, and was arranging them slowly in systematic order.

'And your music, Dr. Whitaker?'

The mulatto stammered for a moment. 'Miss Dupuy,' he said with a slight hesitation, 'I have—I have published the little piece—the Hurricane Symphony, you know—that I showed you once on board the *Severn*. I have published it in London. If you will allow me—I—I—I will present you, as I promised, with a copy of the music.'

'Thank you,' Nora said. 'How very good of you. Will you send it to me to Orange Grove, or—will you leave it here some day with Mrs. Hawthorn?'

The mulatto felt his face grow hot and burning as he answered with as much carelessness as he could readily command: 'I have a copy here with me—it's with my hat in the piazza. If you will permit me, Mrs. Hawthorn, I'll just step out and fetch it. I—I brought it with me, Miss Dupuy, thinking it just possible I might happen to meet you here this morning.' He didn't add that he had brought it out with him day after day for the last fortnight, in the vain hope of chancing to meet her; and had carried it back again with a heavy heart night after night, when he had failed to see her in that one solitary possible meeting-place.

Nora took the piece that he handed her, fresh and white from the press of a famous London firm of music-sellers, and glanced hastily at the top of the title-page for the

promised dedication. There was none visible anywhere. The title-page ran simply: 'Op. 14. Hurricane Symphony. Souvenir des Indes. By W. Clarkson Whitaker.'

'But, Dr. Whitaker,' Nora said, pouting a little in her pretty fashion, 'this isn't fair, you know. You promised to dedicate the piece to me. I was quite looking forward to seeing my name in big letters, printed in real type, on the top of the title-page!'

The mulatto doctor's heart beat fast that moment with a very unwonted and irregular pulsation. Then she really wished him to dedicate it to her! Why on earth had he been so timorous as to strike out her name at the last moment on the fair copy he had sent to London for publication? 'I thought, Miss Dupuy,' he answered slowly, 'our positions were so very different in Trinidad, that when

I came here and felt how things actually stood, I—I judged it better not to put your name in conjunction with mine on the same title-page.'

'Then you did quite wrong!' Nora retorted warmly; 'and I'm very angry with you—I am really, I assure you. You ought to have kept your promise when you gave it me. I wanted to see my own name in print, and on a piece of music too. I expect, now, I've lost the chance of seeing myself in black and white for ever and ever.'

The mulatto smiled a smile of genuine pleasure. 'It's easily remedied, Miss Dupuy,' he answered quickly. 'If you really mean it, I shall dedicate my very next composition to you. You're extremely kind to take such a friendly interest in my poor music.'

'I hope I'm not overdoing it,' Nora

thought to herself. 'But the poor fellow really has so much to put up with, that one can't help behaving a little kindly to him, when one happens to get the opportunity.'

When Dr. Whitaker rose to leave, he shook hands with Nora very warmly, and said as he did so: 'Good-bye, Miss Dupuy. I shan't forget next time that the dedication is to be fairly printed in good earnest.'

'Mind you don't, Dr. Whitaker,' Nora responded gaily. 'Good-bye. I suppose I shan't see you again, as usual, for another week of Sundays!'

The mulatto smiled once more, a satisfied smile, as he answered quickly: 'Oh yes, Miss Dupuy. We shall meet on Monday next. Of course, you're going to the Governor's ball at Banana Garden!'

Nora started. 'The Governor's ball!' she

repeated—'the Governor's ball! Oh yes, of course I'm going there, Dr. Whitaker.—But are you invited?'

She said it thoughtlessly, on the spur of the moment, for it had never occurred to her that the brown doctor would have an invitation also; but the tone of surprise in which she spoke cut the poor young mulatto to the very quick in that moment of triumph. He drew himself up proudly as he answered in a hasty tone: 'Oh yes; even I am invited to Banana Garden, you know, Miss Dupuy. The Governor of the colony at least can recognise no distinction of class or colour in his official capacity'

Nora's face flushed crimson. 'I shall hope to see you there,' she answered quickly. 'I'm glad you're going.—Marian, dear, we shall be quite a party. I only wish I was going with

you, instead of being trotted off in proper style by that horrid old Mrs. Pereira.'

Dr. Whitaker said no more, but raised his hat upon the piazza steps, jumped upon his horse, and took his way along the dusty road that led from the Hawthorns' cottage to the residence of the Honourable Robert Whitaker. As he reached the house, Miss Euphemia was laughing loudly in the drawing-room with her bosom friend, Miss Seraphina M'Culloch. 'Wilberforce!' Miss Euphemia cried, the moment her brother made his appearance on the outer piazza, 'jest you come straight in here, I tellin' you. Here's Pheenie come around to hab a talk wit you. You is too unsocial altogedder. You always want to go an' bury yourself in your own study. Oh my, Oh my! Young men dat come from England, dey hasn't got

no conversation at all for to talk wit de ladies.'

Dr. Whitaker was not in the humour just that moment to indulge in pleasantries with Miss Seraphina M'Culloch, a brown young lady of buxom figure and remarkably free and-easy conversation ; so he sighed impatiently as he answered with a hasty wave of his hand : 'No, Euphemia ; I can't come in and see your friend just this minute. I must go into my own room to make up some medicines—some very urgent medicines—wanted immediately—for some of my poor sick patients.' Heaven help his soul for that transparent little prevarication, for all the medicine had been sent out in charge of a ragged negro boy more than two hours ago ; and it was Dr. Whitaker's own heart that was sick and ill at ease, beyond the power of any medicine ever to remedy.

Miss Euphemia pouted her already sufficiently protruding lips. 'Always dem stoopid niggers,' she answered contemptuously. 'How on eart a man like you, Wilberforce, dat has always been brought up respectable an proper, in a decent fam'ly, can bear to go an' trow away his time in attendin' to a parcel of low nigger people, is more dan I can ever understan'.—Can you, Seraphina?'

Miss Seraphina responded immediately, that, in her opinion, niggers was a disgraceful set of dat low, disreputable people, dat how a man like Dr. Wilberforce Whitaker could so much demean hisself as ever to touch dem, really surpassed her limited comprehension.

Dr. Whitaker strode angrily away into his own room, muttering to himself as he went, that one couldn't blame the white

people for looking down upon the browns, when the browns themselves, in their foolish travesty of white prejudice, looked down so much upon their brother blacks beneath them. In a minute more, he reappeared with a face of puzzled bewilderment at the drawing-room door, and cried to his sister angrily: 'Euphemia, Euphemia! what have you done, I'd like to know, with all those specimens I brought in this morning, and left, when I went out, upon my study table?'

'Wilberforce,' Miss Euphemia answered with stately dignity, rising to confront him, 'I tink I can't stand dis mess an' rubbish dat you make about de house a minute longer.—Pheenie! I tell you how dat man treat de fam'ly. Every day, he goes out into de woods an' he cuts bush—common bush,

all sort of weed an' trash an' rubbish ; an' he brings dem home, an' puts dem in de study, so dat de house don't never tidy, however much you try for to tidy him. Well, dis mornin' I say to myself: "I don't goin' to stand dis lumber-room in a respectable fam'ly any longer." So I take de bush dat Wilberforce bring in ; I carry him out to de kitchen altogedder ; I open de stove, an' I trow him in all in a lump into de very middle of de kitchen fire. Ha, ha, ha ! him burn an' crackle all de same as if he was chockfull of blazin' gunpowder ! '

Dr. Whitaker's eyes flashed angrily as he cried in surprise: 'What ! all my specimens, Euphemia ! all my specimens ! all the ferns and orchids and curious club-mosses I brought in from Pimento Valley Scrubs early this morning ! '

Miss Euphemia tossed her head contemptuously in the air. 'Yes, Wilberforce,' she answered with a placid smile; 'every one of dem. I burn de whole nasty lot of bush an' trash togedder. An' den, when I finished, I burn de dry ones—de nasty dry tings you put in de cupboards all around de study.'

Dr. Whitaker started in horror. 'My herbarium!' he cried—'my whole herbarium! You don't mean to say, Euphemia, you've actually gone and wantonly destroyed my entire collection?'

'Yes,' Miss Euphemia responded cheerfully, nodding acquiescence several times over; 'I burn de whole lot of dem—paper an' everyting. De nasty tings, dey bring in de cockroach an' de red ants into de study cupboards.'

The mulatto rushed back eagerly and

hastily into his own study; he flung open the cupboard doors, and looked with a sinking heart into the vacant spaces. It was too true, all too true! Miss Euphemia had destroyed in a moment of annoyance the entire result of his years of European collection and his five months' botanical work since he had arrived in Trinidad. The poor young man sat down distracted in his easy chair, and flinging himself back on the padded cushions, ruefully surveyed the bare and empty shelves of his rifled cupboards. It was not so much the mere loss of the pile of specimens—five months' collection only, as well as the European herbarium he had brought with him for purposes of comparison—the one could be easily replaced in a second year; the other could be bought again almost as good as ever from a London dealer—it was the utter sense

of loneliness and isolation, the feeling of being so absolutely misunderstood, the entire want of any reasonable and intelligent sympathy. He sat there idly for many minutes, staring with blank resignation at the empty cases, and whistling to himself a low plaintive tune, as he gazed and gazed at the bare walls in helpless despondency. At last, his eye fell casually upon his beloved violin. He rose up, slowly and mournfully, and took the precious instrument with reverent care from its silk-lined case. Drawing his bow across the familiar strings, he let the music come forth as it would ; and the particular music that happened to frame itself upon the trembling catgut on the humour of the moment was his own luckless Hurricane Symphony. For half an hour he sat there still, varying that well-known theme with unstudied impromptus,

and playing more for the sake of forgetting everything earthly, than of producing any very particular musical effect. By-and-by, when his hand had warmed to its work, and he was beginning really to feel what it was he was playing, the door opened suddenly, and a bland voice interrupted his solitude with an easy flow of colloquial English.

'Wilberforce, my dear son,' the voice said in its most sonorous accents, 'dere is company come; you will excuse my interruptin' you. De ladies an' gentlemen dat we expec' to dinner has begun to arrive. Dey is waitin' to be introduced to de inheritor of de tree names most intimately connected wit de great revolution which I have had de pleasure an' honour of bringin' about for my enslaved bredderin. De ladies especially is most anxious to make your acquaintance.

He, he, he! de ladies is most anxious. An', my dear son, whatever you do, don't go on playin' any longer dat loogoobrious melancholy fiddle-toon. If you *must* play someting, play us someting lively—*Pretty little yaller Gal*, or someting of dat sort!—Ladies an' gentlemen, I have de pleasure of introducin' to you my dear son, Dr. Wilberforce Clarkson Whitaker, of de Edinburgh University.'

Dr. Whitaker almost flung down his beloved violin in his shame and disgrace at this untimely interruption. 'Father,' he said, as kindly as he was able, 'I am not well to-night—I am indisposed—I am suffering somewhat—you must excuse me, please; I'm afraid I shan't be able to meet your friends at dinner this evening.' And taking down his soft hat from the peg in the piazza, he

crushed it despairingly upon his aching head, and stalked out, alone and sick at heart, into the dusty, dreary, cactus-bordered lanes of that transformed and desolate Trinidad.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE Governor's dance was the great event of the Trinidad season—the occasion to which every girl in the whole island looked forward for months with the intensest interest. And it was also a great event to Dr. Whitaker; for it was the one time and place, except the Hawthorns' drawing-room, where he could now meet Nora Dupuy on momentary terms of seeming equality. In the eye of the law, even in Trinidad, white men, black men, and brown men are all equal; and under the Governor's roof, as became the representative of law and order in the little island, there

were no invidious distinctions of persons between European and negro. Every well-to-do inhabitant, irrespective of cuticular peculiarities, was duly bidden to the Governor's table: ebony and ivory mingled freely together once in a moon at the Governor's At Homes and dances. And Dr. Whitaker had made up his mind that on that one solitary possible occasion he would venture on his sole despairing appeal to Nora Dupuy, and stand or fall by her final answer.

It was not without serious misgivings that the mulatto doctor had at last decided upon thus tempting Providence. He was weary of the terrible disillusion that had come upon him on his return to the home of his fathers; weary of the painfully vulgar and narrow world into which he had been cast by unrelenting circumstances. He could not live

any longer in Trinidad. Let him fight it out as he would for the sake of his youthful ideals, the battle had clearly gone against him, and there was nothing left for him now but to give it up in despair and fly to England. He had talked the matter over with Edward Hawthorn—not, indeed, the question of proposing to Nora Dupuy, for that he held too sacred for any other ear, but the question of stopping in the island and fighting down the unconquerable prejudice—and even Edward had counselled him to go; for he felt how vastly different were the circumstances of the struggle in his own case and in those of the poor young mulatto doctor. He himself had only to fight against the social prejudices of men his real inferiors in intellect and culture and moral standing. Dr. Whitaker had to face as well the utterly uncongenial brown

society into which he had been rudely pitchforked by fate, like a gentleman into the midst of a pot-house company. It was best for them all that Dr. Whitaker should take himself away to a more fitting environment; and Edward had himself warmly advised him to return once more to free England.

The Governor's dance was given, not at Government House in the Plains, but at Banana Garden, the country bungalow, perched high up on a solitary summit of the Westmoreland mountains. The big ballroom was very crowded; and Nora Dupuy, in a pale maize-coloured evening dress, was universally recognised by black, brown, and white alike as the belle of the evening. She danced almost every round with one partner after another; and it was not till almost half

the evening had passed away that Dr. Whitaker got the desired chance of even addressing her. The chance came at last just before the fifth waltz, a dance that Nora had purposely left vacant, in case she should happen to pick up in the earlier part of the evening an exceptionally agreeable and promising partner. She was sitting down to rest beside her chaperon of the night, on a bench placed just outside the window in the tropical garden, when the young mulatto, looking every inch a gentleman in his evening dress—the first time Nora had ever seen him so attired—strolled anxiously up to her, with ill-affected carelessness, and bowed a timid bow to his former travelling companion. Pure opposition to Mr. Dupuy, and affection for the two Hawthorns, had made Nora exceptionally gracious just that

moment to all brown people; and, on purpose to scandalise her chaperon—an amusement always dear to every girl—she returned the doctor's hesitating salute with a pleasant smile of perfect cordiality. 'Dr. Whitaker!' she cried, leaning over towards him in a kindly way, which made the poor mulatto's heart flutter terribly; 'so here you are, as you promised! I'm so glad you've come this evening.—And have you brought Miss Whitaker with you?'

The mulatto hesitated and stammered. If he had been a white man, he would have blushed as well; indeed, he did blush internally, though, of course, Nora did not perceive it through his dusky skin. She could not possibly have asked him a more *mal à propos* question. The poor young man looked about him feebly, and then answered

in a low voice: 'Yes; my father and sister are here somewhere.'

'Nora, my dear,' her chaperon said in a tone of subdued feminine thunder, 'I didn't know you had the pleasure of Miss Whitaker's acquaintance.'

'Neither have I, Mrs. Pereira; but perhaps Dr. Whitaker will be good enough to introduce me.—Not now, thank you, Dr. Whitaker; I don't want you to run away this minute and fetch your sister. Some other time will do as well. It's so seldom, you know, we have the chance of a good talk now together.'

Dr. Whitaker smiled and stammered. It was possible, of course, to accept Nora's reluctance in either of two senses: she might be anxious that he should stop and talk to her; or she might merely wish indefinitely to

postpone the pleasure of making Miss Euphemia's personal acquaintance; but she flooded him so with the light of her eyes as she spoke, that he chose to put the most flattering of the two alternative interpretations upon her ambiguous sentence.

'You are very good to say so,' he answered, still timidly; and Nora noticed how very different was his manner of speaking now from the self-confident Dr. Whitaker of the old *Severn* days. Trinidad had clearly crushed all the confidence as well as all the enthusiasm clean out of him. 'You are very good, indeed, Miss Dupuy; I wish the opportunities for our meeting occurred oftener.'

He stood talking beside her for a minute or two longer, uttering the mere polite commonplaces of ball-room conversation—the heat of

the evening, the shortcomings of the band, the beauty of the flowers—when suddenly Nora gave a little jump and seized her programme with singular discomposure. Dr. Whitaker looked up at once, and divined by instinct the cause of her hasty movement. Tom Dupuy, just fresh from the cane-cutting, was looking about for her down the long corridor at the opposite end of the inner garden. 'Where's my cousin? Have you seen my cousin?' he was asking everybody; for the seat where Nora was sitting with Mrs. Pereira stood under the shade of a big papaw tree, and so it was impossible for him to discern her face, though she could see his features quite distinctly.

'I won't dance with that horrid man, my cousin Tom!' Nora said in her most decided

voice. 'I'm quite sure he's coming here this minute on purpose to ask me.'

'Is your programme full?' Dr. Whitaker inquired with a palpitating heart.

'No; not quite,' she answered, and handed it to him encouragingly. There was just one dance still left vacant—the next waltz. 'I'm too tired to dance it out,' Nora cried pettishly. 'The horrid man! I hope he won't see me.'

'He's coming this way, dear,' Mrs. Pereira put in with placid composure. 'You'll have to sit it out with him, now; there's no help for it.'

'Sit it out with him!—sit it out with Tom Dupuy! O no, Mrs. Pereira; I wouldn't do it for a thousand guineas.'

'What will you do, then?' Dr. Whitaker asked tremulously, still holding the programme and pencil in his undecided hand. Dare he—

dare he ask her to dance just once with him ?

'What shall I do ?—Why, nothing simpler Have an engagement already, of course, Dr. Whitaker.'

She looked at him significantly. Tom Dupuy was just coming up. If Dr. Whitaker meant to ask her, there was no time to be lost. His knees gave way beneath him, but he faltered out at last in some feeble fashion : 'Then, Miss Dupuy, may I—may I—may I have the pleasure ?'

To Mrs. Pereira's immense dismay, Nora immediately smiled and nodded. 'I can't dance it with you,' she said with a hasty gesture—she shrank, naturally, from that open confession of faith before the whole assembled company—'but if you'll allow me, I'll sit it out with you here in the garden. You may

put your name down for it,' if you like. Quickly, please—write it quickly; here's Tom Dupuy just coming.'

The mulatto had hardly scratched his own name with shaky pencilled letters on the little card, when Tom Dupuy swaggered up in his awkward, loutish, confident manner, and with a contemptuous nod of condescending half-recognition to the overjoyed mulatto, asked, in his insular West Indian drawl, whether Nora could spare him a couple of dances.

'Your canes seem to have delayed you too late, Tom Dupuy,' Nora answered coldly. 'Dr. Whitaker has just asked me for my last vacancy. You should come earlier to a dance, you know, if you want to find a good partner.'

Tom Dupuy stared hard at her face in puzzled astonishment. 'Your last vacancy!'

he cried incredulously. 'Dr. Whitaker! No more dances to spare, Nora! No, no, I say; this won't do, you know! You've done this on purpose.—Let me have a squint at your programme, will you?'

'If you don't choose to take my word for the facts,' Nora answered haughtily, 'you can see the names and numbers of my engagements for yourself on my programme, Tom.—Dr. Whitaker, have the kindness to hand my cousin my programme, if you please.—Thank you.'

Tom Dupuy took the programme ungraciously, and glanced down it with an angry eye. He read every name out aloud till he came to number eleven, 'Dr. Whitaker.' As he reached that name, his lip curled with an ugly suddenness, and he handed the bit of cardboard back coldly to his defiant cousin.

'Very well, Miss Nora,' he answered with a sneer. 'You're quite at liberty, of course, to choose your own company however it pleases you. I see your programme's quite full; but your list of names is rather comprehensive than select, I fancy.—The last name was written down as I was coming towards you. This is a plot to insult me.—Dr. Whitaker, we shall settle this little difference elsewhere, probably—with the proper weapon—a horse-whip. Though your ancestors, to be sure, were better accustomed, I believe, sir, to a good raw cowhide.—Good evening, Miss Nora. —Good evening, Dr. Whitaker.'

The mulatto's eyes flashed fire, but he replied with a low and stately bow, in suppressed accents: 'I shall be ready to answer you in this matter whenever you wish, Mr. Dupuy—and with your own weapon. Good

evening.' And he held out his arm quietly to Nora.

Nora rose and took the mulatto's proffered arm at once with a sweeping air of utter indifference. 'Shall we take a turn around the gardens, Dr. Whitaker?' she asked calmly, reassuring herself at the same time with a rapid glance that nobody except poor frightened Mrs. Pereira had overheard this short altercation.—'How lovely the moon looks to-night! What an exquisite undertone of green in the long shadows of those columns in the portico!'

'Undertone of green!' Tom Dupuy exclaimed aloud in vulgar derision (he was too much of a clod to see that his cue in the scene was fairly past, and that dignity demanded of him now to keep perfectly silent). 'Undertone of green, indeed, with her precious

nigger !—Mrs. Pereira, this is your fault ! A pretty sort of chaperon *you* make, upon my word, to let her go and engage herself to sit out a dance with a common mulatto !—Where's Uncle Theodore ? Where is he, I tell you ? I shall run and fetch him this very minute. I always said that in the end that girl Nora would go and marry a woolly-headed brown man.'

CHAPTER XXII.

Nora and the mulatto walked across the garden in unbroken silence; past the fountain in the centre of the courtyard; past the corridor by the open supper-room; past the hanging lanterns on the outer shrubbery; and down the big flight of stone steps to the gravelled Italian terrace that overlooked the deep tropical gully. When they reached the foot of the staircase, Nora said in as unconcerned a tone as she could muster up: 'Let us walk down here, away from the house, Dr. Whitaker. Tom may perhaps send papa out to look for me, and I'd rather not meet him

till the next dance is well over. Please take me along the terrace.'

Dr. Whitaker turned with her silently along the path, and uttered not a word till they reached the marble seat at the end of the creeper-covered balustrade. Then he sat down moodily beside her, and said in what seemed a perfectly unruffled voice: 'Miss Dupuy, I am not altogether sorry that this little incident has turned out just as it has happened. It enables you to judge for yourself the sort of insult that men of my colour are liable to meet with here in Trinidad.'

Nora fingered her fan nervously. 'Tom Dupuy's always an unendurably rude fellow,' she said, with affected carelessness. 'He's rude by nature, you know, that's the fact of it. He's rude to me. He's rude to everybody. He's a boor, Dr. Whitaker; a boor at

heart. You mustn't take any notice of what he says to you.'

'Yes: he's a boor, Miss Dupuy—and I shall venture to say so, although he's your own cousin—but in what other country in the world would such a boor venture to believe himself able to look down upon other men, his equals in everything except an accident of colour?'

'Oh, Dr. Whitaker, you make too much altogether of his rudeness. It isn't personal to you; it's part of his nature.'

'Miss Dupuy,' the young mulatto burst out suddenly, after a moment's pause and internal struggle, 'I'm not sorry for it, as I said before; for it gives me the opportunity of saying something to you that I have long been waiting to tell you.'

'Well?'—frigidly.

'Well, it is this: I mean at once to leave Trinidad.'

Nora started. It was not quite what she was expecting. 'To leave Trinidad, Dr Whitaker? And where to go? Back to England?'

'Yes, back to England.—Miss Dupuy, for Heaven's sake, listen to me for a moment. This dance won't be very long. As soon as it's over, I must take you back to the ball-room. I have only these few short minutes to speak to you. I have been waiting long for them—looking forward to them; hoping for them; dreading them; foreseeing them. Don't disappoint me of my one chance of a hearing. Sit here and hear me out: I beg of you—I implore you.'

Nora's fingers trembled terribly, and she

felt half inclined to rise at once and go back to Mrs. Pereira; but she could not find it in her heart utterly to refuse that pleading tone of profound emotion, even though it came from only a brown man. 'Well, Dr. Whitaker,' she answered tremulously, 'say on whatever you have to say to me.'

'I'm going to England, Miss Dupuy,' the poor young mulatto went on in broken accents; 'I can stand no longer the shame and misery of my own surroundings in this island. You know what they are. Picture them to yourself for a moment. Forget you are a white woman, a member of this old proud unforgiving aristocracy—"for they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong:" forget it for once, and try to think how it would feel to you, after your English up-bringing, with your tastes and ideas and habits and sentiments, to be

suddenly set down in the midst of a society like that of the ignorant coloured class here in Trinidad. On the one side, contempt and contumely from the most boorish and unlettered whites; on the other side, utter uncongeniality with one's own poor miserable people. Picture it to yourself—how absolutely unendurable!'

Nora bethought her silently of Tom Dupuy from both points of view, and answered in a low tone: 'Dr. Whitaker, I recognise the truth of what you say. I—I am sorry for you; I sympathise with you.'

It was a great deal for a daughter of the old slave-owning oligarchy to say—how much, people in England can hardly realise; and Dr. Whitaker accepted it gratefully. 'It's very kind of you, Miss Dupuy,' he went on again, the tears rising quickly to his eyes,

'very, very kind of you. But the struggle is over; I can't stand it any longer; I mean at once to return to England.'

'You will do wisely, I think,' Nora answered looking at him steadily.

'I will do wisely,' he repeated in a wandering tone. 'Yes, I will do wisely. But, Miss Dupuy, strange to say, there is one thing that still binds me down to Trinidad.—Oh, for Heaven's sake, listen to me, and don't condemn me unheard.—No, no, I beg of you, don't rise yet! I will be brief. Hear me out, I implore of you, I implore of you! I'm only a mulatto, I know; but mulattoes have a heart as well as white men—better than some, I do honestly believe. Miss Dupuy, from the very first moment I saw you, I—I loved you! yes, I *will* say it—I loved you!—I loved you!'

Nora rose, and stood erect before him, proud but tremulous, in her girlish beauty. 'Dr. Whitaker,' she said, in a very calm tone, 'I knew it; I saw it. From the first moment you ever spoke to me, I knew it perfectly.'

He drew a long breath to still the violent throbbing of his heart. 'You knew it,' he said, almost joyously—'you knew it! And you did not repel me! Oh, Miss Dupuy, for one of your blood and birth, that was indeed a great condescension!'

Nora hesitated. 'I liked you, Dr. Whitaker,' she answered slowly—'I liked you, and I was sorry for you.'

'Thank you, thank you. Whatever else you say, for that one word I thank you earnestly. But oh, what more can I say to you? I love you; I have always loved you. I shall always love you in future. Take me

or reject me, I shall always love you. And yet, how can I ask you? But in England—in England, Miss Dupuy, the barrier would be less absolute.—Yes, yes; I know how hopeless it is: but this once—this once only! I *must* ask you! Oh, for Heaven's sake, in England—far away from it all—in London, where nobody thinks of these things! Why, I know a Hindu barrister—— But there! it's not a matter for reasoning; it lies between heart and heart! Oh, Miss Dupuy, tell me—tell me, for God's sake, tell me, is there—is there any chance for me?'

Nora's heart relented within her. 'Dr. Whitaker,' she said slowly and remorsefully, 'you can't tell how much I feel for you. I can see at once what a dreadful position you are placed in. I can see, of course, how impossible it is for you ever to think of

marrying any—any lady of your own colour —at least as they are brought up here in Trinidad. I can see that you could only fall in love with—with a white lady, a person fitted by education and manners to be a companion to you. I know how clever you are, and I think I can see how good you are too. I know how far all your tastes and ideas are above those of the people you must mix with here, or, for that matter, above Tom Dupuy's —or my own either. I see it all; I know it all. And indeed, I like you—I admire you, and I like you. I don't want you to think me unkind and unappreciative.—Dr. Whitaker, I feel truly flattered that you should speak so to me this evening—but——' And she hesitated. The young mulatto felt that that 'but' was the very deathblow to his last faint hope and aspiration, 'But—— Well, you

know these things are something more than a mere matter of liking and admiring. Let us still be friends, Dr. Whitaker—let us still be friends.—And there's the band striking up the next waltz. Will you kindly take me back to the ball-room? I—I am engaged to dance it with Captain Castello.'

'One second, Miss Dupuy—for God's sake, one second! Is that final? Is that irrevocable?'

'Final, Dr. Whitaker—quite final. I like you; I admire you; but I can never, never, never—never accept you!'

The mulatto clapped his hand wildly for one moment to his forehead, and uttered a little low sharp piercing cry. 'My God, my God,' he exclaimed in an accent of terrible despair, 'then it is all over—all, all over!' Next instant he had drawn himself together

with an effort again, and offering Nora his arm with constrained calmness, he began to lead her back towards the crowded ball-room. As he neared the steps, he paused once more for a second, and almost whispered in her ear in a hollow voice: 'Thank you, thank you for ever for at least your sympathy!'

CHAPTER XXIII.

THEY had reached the top of the stone steps, when two voices were borne upon them from the two ends of the corridor opposite. The first was Mr. Dupuy's. 'Where is she?' it said.—'Mrs. Pereira, where's Nora? You don't mean to say this is true that Tom tells me—that you've actually gone and let her sit out a dance with that conceited nigger fellow, Dr. Whitaker? Upon my word, my dear madam, what this island is coming to nowadays is really more than I can imagine.'

The second voice was a louder and

blander one. 'My son, my son,' it said, in somewhat thick accents, 'my dear son, Wilberforce Clarkson Whitaker! Where is he? Is he in de garden? I want to introduce him to de Governor's lady. De Governor's lady has been graciously pleased to express an interes in de inheritor of de tree names most closely bound up wit de great social revolution, in which I have had de honour to be de chief actor, for de benefit of millions of my fellow-subjecks.—Walkin' in de garden, is he, wit de daughter of my respected friend, de Honourable Teodore Dupuy of Orange Grove? Ha, ha! Dat's de way wit de young dogs—dat's de way wit dem. Always off walkin' in de garden wit de pretty ladies. Ha, ha, ha! I don't blame dem!'

Dr. Whitaker, his face on fire and his ears tingling, pushed on rapidly down the very

centre of the garden, taking no heed of either voice in outward seeming, but going straight on, with Nora on his arm, till he reached the open window-doors that led directly into the big ball-room. There, seething in soul, but outwardly calm and polite, he handed over his partner with a conventional smile to Captain Castello, and turning on his heel, strode away bitterly across the ball-room to the outer doorway. Not a few people noticed him as he strode off in his angry dignity, for Tom Dupuy had already been blustering—with his usual taste—in the corridors and refreshment room about his valiant threat of soundly horsewhipping the woolly-headed mulatto. In the vestibule, the doctor paused and asked for his dust-coat. A negro servant, in red livery, grinning with delight at what he thought the brown man's discomfiture, held

it up for him to put his arms into. Dr. Whitaker noticed the fellow's malevolent grin, and making an ineffectual effort to push his left arm down the right arm sleeve, seized the coat angrily in his hand, doubled it up in a loose fold over his elbow, and then, changing his mind, as an angry man will do, flung it down again with a hasty gesture upon the hall table. 'Never mind the coat,' he said fiercely. 'Bring round my horse! Do you hear, fellow? My horse, my horse! This minute, I tell you!'

The red-liveried servant called to an invisible negro outside, who soon returned with the doctor's mountain pony.

'Better take de coat, sah,' the man in livery said with a sarcastic guffaw. 'Him help to proteck your back an' sides from Mistah Dupuy, him horsewhip!'

Dr. Whitaker leapt upon his horse, and turned to the man with a face livid and distorted with irrepressible anger. 'You black devil, you!' he cried passionately, using the words of reproach that even a mulatto will hurl in his wrath at his still darker brother, 'do you think I'm running away from Tom Dupuy's miserable horsewhip? I'm not afraid of a hundred fighting Dupuys and all their horsewhips. Let him dare to touch me, and, by Heaven, he'll find he'd better far have touched the devil.—You black image, you! how dare you speak to me? How dare you?—how dare you?' And he cut at him viciously in impotent rage with the little riding-whip he held in his fingers.

The negro laughed again, a loud hoarse laugh, and flung both his hands up with open fingers in African derision. Dr. Whitaker

dug his spurless heel deep into his horse's side, sitting there wildly in his evening dress, and turned his head in mad despair out towards the outer darkness. The moon was still shining brightly overhead, but by contrast with the lights in the gaily illuminated ball-room, the path beneath the bamboo clumps in the shrubbery looked very gloomy, dark, and sombre.

Two or three of the younger men, anxious to see whether Tom Dupuy would get up 'a scene' then and there, crowded out hastily to the doorway, to watch the nigger fellow ride away for his life for fear of a horse-whipping. As they stood in the doorway, peering into the darkness after the retreating upright figure, there came all at once, with appalling suddenness, a solitary vivid flash of lightning, such as one never sees outside the

tropics, illuminating with its awful light the whole length of the gardens and the gully beneath them. At the same second, a terrific clap of thunder seemed to burst, like innumerable volleys of the heaviest artillery, right above the roof of the Governor's bungalow. It was ghastly in its suddenness and in its strength. No one could say where the lightning struck, for it seemed to have struck on every side at once: all that they saw was a single sheet of all-pervading fire, in whose midst the mulatto and his horse stood silhouetted out in solid black, a statuesque group of living sculpture, against the brilliant fiery background. The horse was rearing, erect on his hind-legs; and Dr. Whitaker was reining him in and patting his neck soothingly with hand half lifted. So instantaneous was the flash, indeed, that no motion

or change of any sort was visible in the figures. The horse looked like a horse of bronze, poised in the air on solid metal legs, and merely simulating the action of rearing.

For a minute or two, not a soul spoke a word, or broke in any way the deathless silence that succeeded that awful and unexpected outburst. The band had ceased playing as if by instinct, and every person in the ball-room stood still and looked one at another with mute amazement. Then, by a common impulse, they pressed all out slowly together, and gazed forth with wondering eyes upon the serene moonlight. The stars were shining brightly overhead: the clap had broken from an absolutely clear sky. Only to northward, on the very summits of the highest mountains, a gathering of deep black clouds rolled slowly onward, and threatened to

pass across the intervening valley. Through the profound silence, the ring of Dr. Whitaker's horse's hoofs could be heard distinctly down below upon the solid floor of the mountain pathway.

'Who has left already?' the Governor asked anxiously of the negro servants.

'Dr. Whitaker, your Excellency, sah,' the man in red livery answered, grinning respectfully.

'Call him back!' the Governor said in a tone of command. 'There's an awful thunderstorm coming. No man will ever get down alive to the bottom of the valley until it's over.'

'It doan't no use, sah,' the negro answered. 'His horse's canterin' down de hillside de same as if him starin' mad, sah!' And as he spoke, Dr. Whitaker's white shirt-front

gleamed for a second in the moonlight far below, at a turn of the path beside the threatening gully.

Almost before anyone could start to recall him, the rain and thunder were upon them with tropical violence. The clouds had drifted rapidly across the sky; the light of the moon was completely effaced; black darkness reigned over the mountains; not a star, not a tree, not an object of any sort could now be discerned through the pitchy atmosphere. Rain! it was hardly rain, but rather a continuous torrent outpoured as from some vast aërial fountain. Every minute or two a terrific flash lighted up momentarily the gloomy darkness; and almost simultaneously, loud peals of thunder bellowed and re-echoed from peak to peak. The dance was interrupted for the time at least, and everybody

crowded out silently to the veranda and the corridors, where the lightning and the rain could be more easily seen, mingling with the thunder in one hideous din, and forming torrents that rushed down the dry gullies in roaring cataracts to the plains below.

And Dr. Whitaker? On he rode, the lightning terrifying his little mountain pony at every flash, the rain beating down upon him mercilessly with equatorial fierceness, the darkness stretching in front of him and below him, save when, every now and then, the awful forks of flame illumined for a second the gulfs and precipices that yawned beneath in profoundest gloom. Yet still he rode on, erect and heedless, his hat now lost, bareheaded to the pitiless storm, cold without and fiery hot at heart within. He cared for nothing now—for nothing—for nothing. Nora had

put the final coping-stone on that grim growth of black despair within his soul, that palace of nethermost darkness which alone he was henceforth to inhabit. Nay, in the heat and bitterness of the moment, had he not even sealed his own doom? Had he not sunk down actually to the level of those who despised and contemned him? Had he not used words of contemptuous insolence to his own colour, in the 'black devil' he had flung so wildly at the head of the negro in livery? What did it matter now whatever happened to him? All, all was lost; and he rode on recklessly, madly, despairingly, down that wild and precipitous mountain pathway, he knew not and he cared not whither.

It was a narrow track, a mere thread of bridle-path, dangerous enough even in the best of seasons, hung half way up the steep

hillside, with the peak rising sheer above on one hand, and the precipice yawning black beneath on the other. Stones and creepers cumbered the ground; pebbles and earth, washed down at once by the violence of the storm, blocked and obliterated the track in many places; here, a headlong torrent tore across it with resistless vehemence; there, a little chasm marked the spot where a small landslip had rendered it impassable. The horse floundered and reared and backed up again and again in startled terror; Dr. Whitaker, too reckless at last even to pat and encourage him, let him go whatever way his fancy led him among the deep brake of cactuses and tree ferns. And still the rain descended in vast sheets and flakes of water, and still the lightning flashed and quivered among the ravines and gullies of those torn

and crumpled mountain-sides. The mulatto took no notice any longer; he only sang aloud in a wild, defiant, half-crazy voice the groaning notes of his own terrible Hurricane Symphony.

So they went, on and down, on and down, on and down always, through fire and water, the horse plunging and kicking and backing; the rider flinging his arms carelessly around him, till they reached the bend in the road beside Louis Delgado's mud cottage. The old African was sitting cross-legged by himself at the door of his hut, watching the rain grimly by the intermittent light of the frequent flashes. Suddenly, a vivider flash than any burst in upon him, with a fearful clap; and by its light, he saw a great gap in the midst of the path, twenty yards wide, close by the cottage; and at its upper end, a horse and

rider, trembling on the very brink of the freshly cut abyss.

Next instant the flash was gone, and when the next came, Louis Delgado saw nothing but the gap itself and the wild torrent that had so instantly cut it.

The old man smiled an awful smile of gratified malevolence. 'Ha, ha!' he said to himself aloud, hugging his withered old breast in malicious joy; 'I guess dat buckra lyin' dead by now, down, down, down, at de bottom ob de gully. Ha, ha! ha, ha, ha! him lyin' dead at de bottom ob de gully; an' it one buckra de less left alive to bodder us here in de island ob Trinidad.' He had not seen the mulatto's face; but he took him at once to be a white man because, in spite of rain and spattered mud, his white shirt-front still showed out distinctly in the red glare of the vivid lightning.

CHAPTER XXIV.

No human eye ever again beheld Wilberforce Whitaker, alive or dead. The torrent that had washed down the gap in the narrow horsepath tore away with it in the course of that evening's rain a great mass of tottering earth that had long trembled on the edge of the precipice; and when next day the Governor's servants went down in awed silence to hunt among the débris for the mangled body, they found nothing but a soaked hat on the road behind, and a broken riding-whip close to the huge rent that yawned across the path by the crumbling ledge of newly fallen

clay. Louis Delgado alone could tell of what had happened; and in Louis Delgado's opinion, Dr. Whitaker's crushed and shapeless body must be lying below under ten thousand tons of landslip rubbish. 'I see de gentleman haltin' on de brink ob de hole,' he said a hundred times over to his gossips next day, 'and I tink I hear him call aloud someting as him go ober de tip ob de big precipice. But it doan't sound to me ezackly as if him scared and shoutin'; 'pears more as if him singing to hisself a kind ob mounful miserable psalm-tune.'

In tropical countries, people are accustomed to hurricanes and thunderstorms and landslips and sudden death in every form—does not the Church service even contain that weirdly suggestive additional clause among the petitions of the Litany, 'From earthquake,

tempest, and violent commotion, good Lord, deliver us'?—and so nobody ever tried to dig up Wilberforce Whitaker's buried body; and if they had tried, they would never have succeeded in the vain attempt, for a thousand tons of broken fragments lay on top of it, and crushed it to atoms beneath them. Poor old Bobby felt the loss acutely, after his childish fashion, for nearly a fortnight, and then straightway proceeded to make love as usual to Miss Seraphina and the other ladies, and soon forgot his whole trouble in that one congenial lifelong occupation.

Nora Dupuy did not so quickly recover the shock that the mulatto's sudden and almost supernatural death had given her system. It was many weeks before she began to feel like herself again, or to trust herself in a room alone for more than a very few

minutes together. Born West Indian as she was, and therefore superstitious, she almost feared that Dr. Whitaker's ghost would come to plead his cause with her once more, as he himself had pleaded with her that last unhappy evening on the Italian terrace. It wasn't her fault, to be sure, that she had been the unwitting cause of his death ; and yet in her own heart she felt to herself almost as if she had deliberately and intentionally killed him. That insuperable barrier of race that had stood so effectually in his way while he was still alive was partly removed now that she could no longer see him in person; and more than once, Nora found herself in her own room with tears standing in both her eyes for the poor mulatto she could never possibly or conceivably have married.

As for Tom Dupuy, he couldn't understand such delicate shades and undertones of feeling as those which came so naturally to Nora; and he had, therefore, a short and easy explanation of his own for his lively little cousin's altered demeanour. 'Nora was in love with that infernal nigger fellow,' he said confidently over and over again to his Uncle Theodore. 'You take my word for it, she was head over ears in love with him; that's about the size of it. And that evening when she behaved so disgracefully with him on the terrace at the Governor's, he proposed to her, and she accepted him, as sure as gospel. If I hadn't threatened him with a good sound horsewhipping, and driven him away from the house in a deuce of a funk, so that he went off with his tail between his legs, and broke his damned neck over a precipice

in that terrible thunderstorm—you mark my words, Uncle Theodore—she'd have gone off, as I always said she would, and she'd have ended by marrying a woolly-headed brown man.'

Mr. Theodore Dupuy, for his part, considered that even to mention the bare possibility of such a disgrace within the bosom of the family was an insult to the pure blood of the Dupuys that his nephew Tom ought to have been the last man on earth to dream of perpetrating.

Time rolled on, however, month after month, and gradually Nora began to recover something of her natural gaiety. Even deep impressions last a comparatively short time with bright young girls; and before six months more had fairly rolled by, Nora was again the same gay, light, merry, dancing

little thing that she had always been, in England or in Trinidad.

One morning, about twelve months after Nora's first arrival in the island, the English mail brought a letter for her father, which he read with evident satisfaction, and then handed it contentedly to Nora across the breakfast-table. Nora recognised the crest and monogram in a moment with a faint flutter: she had seen them once before, a year ago, in England. They were Harry Noel's. But the postmark was Barbadoes. She read the letter eagerly and hastily.

'DEAR SIR'—it ran—'I have had the pleasure already of meeting some members of your family on the other side of the Atlantic'—that was an overstatement, Nora thought to herself quietly; the plural for the singular—

'and as I have come out to look after some property of my father's here in Barbadoes, I propose to run across to Trinidad also, by the next steamer, and gain a little further insight into the habits and manners of the West Indies. My intention is to stop during my stay with my friend Mr. Hawthorn, who—as you doubtless know—holds a District judgeship or something of the sort somewhere in Trinidad. But I think it best at the same time to inclose a letter of introduction to yourself from General Sir Henry Laboutillière, whom I dare say you remember as formerly commandant of Port-of-Spain when the Hundred and Fiftieth were in your island. I shall do myself the honour of calling upon you very shortly after my arrival, and am meanwhile, very faithfully yours,

'HARRY NOEL.'

The letter of introduction which accompanied this very formal note briefly set forth that Sir Walter Noel, Mr. Noel's father, was an exceedingly old and intimate friend of the writer's, and that he would feel much obliged if Mr. Dupuy would pay young Mr. Noel any attentions in his power during his short stay in the island of Trinidad.

It would be absurd to deny that Nora felt flattered. She blushed, and blushed, and blushed again, with unmistakable pleasure. To be sure, she had refused Harry Noel; and if he were to ask her again, even now, she would refuse him a second time. But no girl on earth is wholly proof in her own heart against resolute persistence. Even if she doesn't care a pin for a man from the matrimonial point of view, yet provided only he is 'nice' and 'eligible,' she feels naturally

flattered by the mere fact that he pays her attention. If the attention is marked and often renewed, the flattery is all the deeper, subtler, and more effective. But here was Harry Noel, pursuant of his threat (or should we rather say his promise?), following her up right across the Atlantic, and coming to lay siege to her heart with due formalities once more, in the very centre of her own stronghold! Yes, Nora was undeniably pleased. Of course, she didn't care for him; oh, dear, no, not the least little bit in the world, really; but still, even if you don't want to accept a lover, you know, it is at any rate pleasant to have the opportunity of a second time cruelly rejecting him. So Nora blushed, and smiled to herself, and blushed over again, and felt by no means out of humour at Harry Noel's evident persistence.

'Well, Nora?' her father said to her, eyeing her interrogatively. 'What do you think of it?''

'I think, papa, Mr. Noel's a very gentlemanly, nice young man, of a very good old English family.'

'Yes, yes, Nora: I know that, of course. I see as much from Sir Henry Laboutillière's letter of introduction. But what I mean is, we must have him here, at Orange Grove, naturally, mustn't we? It would never do, you see, to let a member of the English aristocracy'—Mr. Dupuy dwelt lovingly upon these latter words with some unction, as preachers dwell with lingering cadence upon the special shibboleths of their own particular sect or persuasion—'go to stop with such people as your coloured friends over yonder at Mulberry, the Hawthorns.'

Nora was silent.

'Why don't you answer me, miss?' Mr Dupuy asked testily, after waiting for a moment in silent expectation.

'Because I will never speak to you about my own friends, papa, when you choose to talk of them in such untrue and undeserved language.'

Mr. Dupuy smiled urbanely. He was in a good humour. It flattered him, too, to think that when members of the English aristocracy came out to Trinidad they should naturally select him, Theodore Dupuy, Esquire, of Orange Grove, as the proper person towards whom to look for hospitality. The fame of the fighting Dupuys was probably not unknown to the fashionable world even in London. They were recognised and talked about. So Mr. Dupuy merely smiled

a bland smile of utter obliviousness, and observed in the air (as men do when they are addressing nobody in particular): 'Coloured people are always coloured people, I suppose, whether they're much or little coloured; just as a dog's always a dog whether he's a great big heavy St. Bernard or a little snarling snapper of a Skye terrier. But anyhow, it's quite clear to me individually that we can't let this young Mr. Noel—a person of distinction, Nora, a person of distinction—go and stop at any other house in this island except here at Orange Grove, I assure you, my dear. Tom or I must certainly go down to meet the steamer, and bring him up here bodily in the buggy, before your friend Mr. Hawthorn—about whose personal complexion I prefer to say absolutely nothing, for good or for evil—has

time to fasten on him and drag him away by main force to his own dwelling-place.' (Mr. Dupuy avoided calling Mulberry Lodge a house on principle; for in the West Indies, it is an understood fact that only white people live in houses.)

'But, papa,' Nora cried, 'you really mustn't. I don't think you ought to bring him up here. Wouldn't it—well, you know, wouldn't it look just a little pointed, considering there's nobody else at all living in the house except you and me, you know, papa?'

'My dear,' Mr. Dupuy said, not unkindly, 'a member of the English aristocracy, when he comes to Trinidad, ought to be received in the house of one of the recognised gentry of the island, and not in that—well, not in the dwelling-place of any person not belong-

ing to the aristocracy of Trinidad. *Noblesse oblige*, Nora; *noblesse oblige*, remember. Besides, when you consider the relation in which you already stand to your cousin Tom, my dear—why, an engaged young lady, of course, an engaged young lady occupies nearly the same position in that respect as if she were already actually married.'

'But I'm not engaged, papa,' Nora answered earnestly. 'And I never will be to Tom Dupuy, if I die unmarried, either.'

'That, my dear,' Mr. Dupuy responded blandly, looking at her with parental fondness, 'is a question on which I venture to think myself far better qualified to form an opinion than a mere girl of barely twenty. Tom and I have arranged between us, as I have often already pointed out to you, that

the family estates ought on all accounts to be reunited in your persons. As soon as you are twenty-two, my dear, we propose that you should marry. Meanwhile, it can only arouse unseemly differences within the family to discuss the details of the question prematurely. I have made up my mind, and I will not go back upon it. A Dupuy never does. As to this young Mr. Noel who's coming from Barbadoes, I shall go down myself to the next steamer, and look out to offer him our hospitality immediately on his arrival, before any coloured people—I mention no names—can seize upon the opportunity of intercepting him, and carrying him off forcibly against his will, bag and baggage, to their own dwelling-places.'

CHAPTER XXV.

On the morning when Harry Noel was to arrive in Trinidad, Mr. Dupuy and Edward Hawthorn both came down early to the landing-stage to await the steamer. Mr. Dupuy condescended to nod in a distant manner to the young judge—he had never forgiven him that monstrous decision in the case of Delgado *versus* Dupuy—and to ask chillily whether he was expecting friends from England.

'No,' Edward Hawthorn answered with a bow as cold as Mr. Dupuy's own. 'I have come down to meet an old English friend of mine, a Mr. Noel, whom I knew very well at

Cambridge and in London, but who's coming at present only from Barbadoes.'

Mr. Dupuy astutely held his tongue. *Noblesse* did not so far impose upon him as to oblige him to confess that it was Harry Noel he, too, had come down in search of. But as soon as the steamer was well alongside, Mr. Dupuy, in his stately, slow, West Indian manner, sailed ponderously down the special gangway, and asked a steward at once to point out to him which of the passengers was Mr. Noel.

Harry Noel, when he received Mr. Dupuy's pressing invitation, was naturally charmed at the prospect of thus being quartered under the same roof with pretty little Nora. Had he known the whole circumstances of the case, indeed, his native good feeling would, of course, have prompted him to go to the Haw-

thorns'; but Edward had been restrained by a certain sense of false shame from writing the whole truth about this petty local race prejudice to his friend in England; and so Harry jumped at once at the idea of being so comfortably received into the very house of which he so greatly desired to become an inmate. 'You're very good, I'm sure,' he answered in his off-hand manner to the old planter. 'Upon my word, I never met anything in my life to equal your open-hearted West Indian hospitality. Wherever one goes, one's uniformly met with open arms. I shall be delighted, Mr. Dupuy, to put up at your place—Orange Grove, I think you call it—ah, exactly—if you'll kindly permit me.—Here, you fellow, go down below, will you, and ask for my luggage.'

Edward Hawthorn was a minute or two

too late. Harry came forward eagerly, in the old friendly fashion, to grasp his hand with a hard grip, but explained to him with a look, which Edward immediately understood, that Orange Grove succeeded in offering him superior attractions even to Mulberry. So the very next morning found Nora and Harry Noel seated together at lunch at Mr. Dupuy's well-loaded table; while Tom Dupuy, who had actually stolen an hour or two from his beloved canes, dropped in casually to take stock of this new possible rival, as he half suspected the gay young Englishman would turn out to be. From the first moment that their eyes met, Tom Dupuy conceived an immediate dislike and distrust for Harry Noel. What did he want coming here to Trinidad? Tom wondered: a fine-spoken, stuck-up, easy-going, haw-haw Londoner, of the sort that

your true-born colonist hates and detests with all the force of his good-hater's nature. Harry irritated him immensely by his natural superiority: a man of Tom Dupuy's type can forgive anything in any other man except higher intelligence and better breeding. Those are qualities for which he feels a profound contempt, not unmingled with hatred, envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. So, as soon as Nora had risen from the table and the men were left alone, West Indian fashion, to their afternoon cigar and cup of coffee, Tom Dupuy began to open fire at once on Harry about his precious coloured friends the Hawthorns at Mulberry.

'So you've come across partly to see that new man at the Westmoreland District Court, have you?' he said sneeringly. 'Well, I dare say he was considered fit company for

gentlemen over in England, Mr. Noel—people seem to have very queer ideas about what's a gentleman and what's not, over in England—but though I didn't like to speak about it before Nora, seeing that they're friends of hers, I think I ought to warn you beforehand that you mustn't have too much to say to them if you want to get on out here in Trinidad. People here are a trifle particular about their company.'

Harry looked across curiously at the young planter, leaning back in awkward fashion with legs outstretched and half turned away from the table, as he sipped his coffee, and answered quietly, with some little surprise: 'Why, yes, Mr. Dupuy, I think our English idea of what constitutes a gentleman does differ slightly in some respects from the one I find current out here in the West Indies. I

knew Hawthorn intimately for several years at Cambridge and in London, and the more I knew of him the better I liked him and the more I respected him. He's a little bit too radical for me, I confess, and a little bit too learned as well; but in every other way, I can't imagine what possible objection you can bring against him.'

Tom Dupuy smiled an ugly smile, and gazed hard at Harry Noel's dark and handsome face and features. 'Well,' he said slowly, a malevolent light gleaming hastily from his heavy eyes, 'we West Indians may be prejudiced; they say we are; but still, we're not fond somehow of making too free with a pack of niggers. Now, I don't say your friend Hawthorn's exactly a nigger outside, to look at: he isn't: he's managed to hide the outer show of his colour finely. I've

seen a good many regular white people, or what passed for white people'—and here he glanced significantly at the fine-spoken Londoner's dark fingers, toying easily with the amber mouthpiece of his dainty cigar-holder—'who were a good many shades darker in the skin than this fellow Hawthorn, for all they thought themselves such very grand gentlemen. Some of 'em may be coloured, and some of 'em mayn't: there's no knowing, when once you get across to England; for people there have no proper pride of race, I understand, and would marry a coloured girl, if she happened to have money, as soon as look at her. But this fellow Hawthorn, though he seems externally as white as you do—and a great deal whiter too, by Jove—is well known out here to be nothing but a coloured person, as his father and his mother were before him.'

Harry Noel puffed out a long stream of white smoke as he answered carelessly: 'Ah, I dare say he is, if what you mean is just that he's got some remote sort of negro tinge somewhere about him—though he doesn't look it; but I expect almost all the old West Indian families, you know, must have intermarried long ago, when English ladies were rare in the colonies, with pretty half-castes.'

Quite unwittingly, the young Englishman had trodden at once on the very tenderest and dearest corn of his proud and unbending West Indian entertainers. Pride of blood is the one form of pride that they thoroughly understand and sympathise with; and this remote hint of a possible (and probable) distant past when the purity of the white race was not quite so efficiently guaranteed as it is nowadays, roused both the fiery

Dupuys immediately to a white-heat of indignation.

'Sir,' Mr. Theodore Dupuy said stiffly, 'you evidently don't understand the way in which we regard these questions out here in the colonies, and especially in Trinidad. There is one thing which your English parliament has not taken from us, and can never take from us; and that is the pure European blood which flows unsullied in all our veins, nowhere polluted by the faintest taint of a vile African intermixture.'

'Certainly,' Mr. Tom Dupuy echoed angrily, 'if you want to call us niggers, you'd better call us niggers outright, and not be afraid of it.'

'Upon my soul,' Harry Noel answered with an apologetic smile, 'I hadn't the least intention, my dear sir, of seeming to hint

anything against the purity of blood in West Indians generally; I only meant, that if my friend Hawthorn—who is really a very good fellow and a perfect gentleman—does happen to have a little distant infusion of negro blood in him, it doesn't seem to me to matter much to any of us nowadays. It must be awfully little—a mere nothing, you know; just the amount one would naturally expect if his people had intermarried once with half-castes a great many generations ago. I was only standing up for my friend, you see.—Surely,' turning to Tom, who still glared at him like a wild beast aroused, 'a man ought to stand up for his friends when he hears them ill spoken of.'

'Oh, quite so,' Mr. Theodore Dupuy replied, in a mollified voice. 'Of course, if Mr. Hawthorn's a friend of yours, and you choose

to stand by him here, in spite of his natural disabilities, on the ground that you happened to know him over in England—where, I believe, he concealed the fact of his being coloured—and you don't like now to turn your back upon him, why, naturally, that's very honourable of you, very honourable.—Tom, my dear boy, we must both admit that Mr. Noel is acting very honourably. And, indeed, we can't expect people brought up wholly in England'—Mr. Dupuy dwelt softly upon this fatal disqualification, as though aware that Harry must be rather ashamed of it—'to feel upon these points exactly as we do, who have a better knowledge and insight into the negro blood and the negro character.'

'Certainly not,' Tom Dupuy continued maliciously. 'People in England don't under-

stand these things at all as we do.—Why, Mr. Noel, you mayn't be aware of it, but even among the highest English aristocracy there are an awful lot of regular coloured people, out-and-out mulattoes. West Indian heiresses in the old days used to go home—brown girls, or at any rate young women with a touch of the tar-brush—daughters of governors and so forth, on the wrong side of the house—you understand'—Mr. Tom Dupuy accompanied these last words with an upward and backward jerk of his left thumb, supplemented by a peculiarly ugly grimace, intended to be facetious—'the sort of trash no decent young fellow over here would have so much as touched with a pair of tongs (in the way of marrying 'em, I mean); and when they got across to England, hanged if they weren't snapped up at once by dukes and

marquises, whose descendants, after all, though they may be lords, are really nothing better, you see, than common brown people!'

He spoke snappishly, but Harry only looked across at him in mild wonder. On the calm and unquestioning pride of a Lincolnshire Noel, remarks such as these fell flat and pointless. If a Noel had chosen to marry a kitchen-maid, according to their simple old-fashioned faith, he would have ennobled her at once, and lifted her up into his own exalted sphere of life and action. Her children after her would have been Lincolnshire Noels, the equals of any duke or marquis in the United Kingdom. So Harry only smiled benignly, and answered in his easy offhand manner: 'By Jove, I shouldn't wonder at all if that were really the case now.

One reads in Thackeray, you know, so much about the wealthy West Indian heiresses, with suspiciously curly hair, who used to swarm in London in the old slavery days. But of course, Mr. Dupuy, it's a well-known fact that all our good families have been awfully recruited by actresses and so forth. I believe some statistical fellow or other has written a book to show that if it weren't for the actresses, the peerage and baronetage would all have died out long ago, of pure inanition. I dare say the West Indian heiresses, with the frizzy hair, helped to fulfil the same good and useful purpose, by bringing an infusion of fresh blood every now and then into our old families.' And Harry ran his hand carelessly through his own copious curling black locks, in perfect unconsciousness of the absurdly malapropos nature of that instinctive action

at that particular moment. His calm sense of utter superiority—that innate belief so difficult to shake, even on the most rational grounds, in most well-born and well-bred Englishmen—kept him even from suspecting the real drift of Tom Dupuy's reiterated innuendoes.

'You came out to Barbadoes to look after some property of your father's, I believe?' Mr. Dupuy put in, anxious to turn the current of the conversation from this very dangerous and fitful channel.

'I did,' Harry Noel answered unconcernedly. 'My father's, or rather my mother's. Her people have property there. We're connected with Barbadoes, indeed. My mother's family were Barbadian planters.'

At the word, Tom Dupuy almost jumped from his seat and brought his fist down

heavily upon the groaning table. 'They were?' he cried inquiringly. 'Barbadian planters? By Jove, that's devilish funny! You don't mean to say, then, Mr. Noel, that some of your own people were really and truly born West Indians?'

'Why the dickens should he want to get so very excited about it?' Harry Noel thought to himself hastily. 'What on earth can it matter to him whether my people were Barbadian planters or Billingsgate fishmongers?'—'Yes, certainly, they were,' he went on to Tom Dupuy with a placid smile of quiet amusement. 'Though my mother was never in the island herself from the time she was a baby, I believe, still all her family were born and bred there, for some generations.—But why do you ask me? Did you know anything

of her people—the Budleighs of the Wilderness?'

'No, no; I didn't know anything of them,' Tom Dupuy replied hurriedly, with a curious glance sideways at his uncle.—'But, by George! Uncle Theodore, it's really a very singular thing, now one comes to think of it, that Mr. Noel should happen to come himself, too, from a West Indian family.'

As Harry Noel happened that moment to be lifting his cup of coffee to his lips, he didn't notice that Tom Dupuy was pointing most significantly to his own knuckles, and signalling to his uncle, with eyes and fingers, to observe Harry's. And if he had, it isn't probable that Lincolnshire Noel would even have suspected the hidden meaning of those strange and odd-looking monkey-like antics.

By-and-by, Harry rose from the table carelessly, and asked in a casual way whether Mr. Dupuy would kindly excuse him; he wanted to go and pay a call which he felt he really mustn't defer beyond the second day from his arrival in Trinidad.

'You'll take a mount?' Mr. Dupuy inquired hospitably. 'You know, we never dream of walking out in these regions. All the horses in my stable are entirely at your disposal. How far did you propose going, Mr. Noel? A letter of introduction you wish to deliver, I suppose, to the Governor or somebody?'

Harry paused and hesitated for a second. Then he answered as politely as he was able: 'No, not exactly a letter of introduction. I feel I mustn't let the day pass

without having paid my respects as early as possible to Mrs. Hawthorn.'

Tom Dupuy nudged his uncle; but the elder planter had too much good manners to make any reply save to remark that one of his niggers would be ready to show Mr. Noel the way to the District judge's—ah—dwelling-place at Mulberry.

As soon as Harry's back was turned, however, Mr. Tom Dupuy sank back incontinently on the dining-room sofa and exploded in a loud and hearty burst of boisterous laughter.

'My dear Tom,' Mr. Theodore Dupuy interposed nervously, 'what on earth are you doing? Young Noel will certainly overhear you. Upon my word, though I can't say I agree with all the young fellow's English sentiments, I really don't see that there's

anything in particular to laugh at in him. He seems to me a very nice, gentlemanly, well-bred, intelligent—— Why, goodness gracious, Tom, what the deuce has come over you so suddenly? You look for all the world as if you were positively going to kill yourself outright with laughing about nothing!'

Mr. Tom Dupuy removed his handkerchief hastily from his mouth, and with an immense effort to restrain his merriment, exclaimed in a low suppressed voice: 'Good Heavens, Uncle Theodore, do you mean to tell me you don't see the whole joke! you don't understand the full absurdity of the situation?'

Mr. Dupuy gazed back at him blankly. 'No more than I understand why on earth you are making such a confounded

fool of yourself now,' he answered contemptuously.

Tom Dupuy calmed himself slowly with a terrific effort, and blurted out at last, in a mysterious undertone: 'Why, the point of it is, don't you see, Uncle Theodore, the fellow's a coloured man himself, as sure as ever you and I are standing here this minute!'

A light burst in upon Mr. Dupuy's benighted understanding with extraordinary rapidity. 'He is!' he cried, clapping his hand to his forehead hurriedly in the intense excitement of a profoundly important discovery. 'He is, he is! There can't be a doubt about it! Baronet or no baronet, as sure as fate, Tom, my boy, that man's a regular brown man!'

'I knew he was,' Tom Dupuy replied

exultantly, 'the very moment I first set eyes upon that ugly head of his! I was sure he was a nigger as soon as I looked at him! I suspected it at once from his eyes and his knuckles. But when he told me his mother was a Barbadian woman—why, then, I knew, as sure as fate, it was all up with him.'

'You're quite right, quite right, Tom; I haven't a doubt about it,' Mr. Theodore Dupuy continued helplessly, wringing his hands before him in bewilderment and horror. 'And the worst of it is I've asked him to stop here as long as he's in Trinidad! What a terrible thing if it were to get about all over the whole island that I've asked a brown man to come and stop for an indefinite period under the same roof with your cousin Nora!'

Tom Dupuy was not wanting in chivalrous magnanimity. He leaned back on the sofa and screwed his mouth up for a moment with a comical expression; then he answered slowly: 'It's a very serious thing, of course, to accuse a man offhand of being a nigger. We mustn't condemn him unheard or without evidence. We must try to find out all we can about his family. Luckily, he's given us the clue himself. He said his mother was a Barbadian woman —a Budleigh of the Wilderness. We'll track him down. I've made a mental note of it!'

Just at that moment, Nora walked quietly into the dining-room to ask the gentlemen whether they meant to go for a ride by-and-by in the cool of the evening. 'For if you do, papa,' she said in explana-

tion, 'you know you must send for Nita to the pasture, for Mr. Noel will want a horse, and you're too heavy for any but the cob, so you'll have to get up Nita for Mr. Noel.'

Tom Dupuy glanced at her suspiciously. 'I suppose since your last particular friend fell over the gully that night at Banana Garden,' he said hastily, 'you'll be picking up next with a new favourite in this fine-spoken, new-fangled, haw-haw, English fellow!'

Nora looked back at him haughtily and defiantly. 'Tom Dupuy,' she answered with a curl of her lip (she always addressed him by both names together), 'you are quite mistaken—utterly mistaken. I don't feel in the least prepossessed by Mr. Noel's personal appearance.'

'Why not? Why not?' Tom inquired eagerly.

'I don't know by what right you venture to cross-question me about such a matter; but as you ask me, I don't mind answering you. Mr. Noel is a shade or two too dark by far ever to take my own fancy.'

Tom whistled low to himself and gave a little start. 'By Jove,' he said, half aloud and half to himself, 'that was a Dupuy that spoke that time, certainly. After all, the girl's got some proper pride still left in her. She doesn't want to marry him, *although* he's a brown man. I always thought myself, as a mere matter of taste, she positively preferred these woolly-headed mulattoes!

CHAPTER XXVI.

MEANWHILE, Harry Noel himself was quite unconsciously riding round to the Hawthorns' cottage, to perform the whole social duty of man by Edward and Marian.

'So you've come out to look after your father's estates in Barbadoes, have you, Mr. Noel?' Marian inquired with a quiet smile, after the first greetings and talk about the voyage were well over.

Harry laughed. 'Well, Mrs. Hawthorn,' he said confidentially, 'my father's estates there seem to have looked after themselves pretty comfortably for the last twenty years,

or at least been looked after vicariously by a rascally local Scotch attorney; and I've no doubt they'd have continued to look after themselves for the next twenty years without my intervention, if nothing particular had occurred otherwise to bring me out here.'

'But something particular did occur—eh, Mr. Noel?'

'No, nothing occurred,' Harry Noel answered, with a distinct stress upon the significant verb. 'But I had reasons of my own which made me anxious to visit Trinidad; and I thought Barbadoes would be an excellent excuse to supply to Sir Walter for the expenses of the journey. The old gentleman jumped at it—positively jumped at it. There's nothing loosens Sir Walter's purse-strings like a devotion to business; and he

declared to me on leaving, with tears in his eyes almost, that it was the first time he ever remembered to have seen me show any proper interest whatsoever in the family property.'

'And what were the reasons that made you so very anxious, then, to visit Trinidad?'

'Why, Mrs. Hawthorn, how can you ask me? Wasn't I naturally desirous of seeing you and Edward once more after a year's absence?'

Marian coughed a little dry cough. 'Friendship is a very powerfully attractive magnet, isn't it, Edward?' she said with an arch smile to her husband. 'It was very good of Mr. Noel to have thought of coming four thousand miles across the Atlantic just to visit you and me, dear—now, wasn't it?

'So very good,' Edward answered, laughing, 'that I should almost be inclined myself (as a lawyer) to suspect some other underlying motive.'

'Well, she *is* a very dear little girl,' Marian went on reflectively.

'She is, certainly,' her husband echoed.

Harry laughed. 'I see you've found me out,' he answered, not altogether unpleased. 'Well, yes, I may as well make a clean breast of it, Mrs. Hawthorn. I've come across on purpose to ask her; and I won't go back either, till I can take her with me. I've waited for twelve months, to make quite sure I knew my own heart and wasn't mistaken about it. Every day, her image has remained there clearer and clearer than before, and I *will* win her, or else stop here for ever.'

'When a man says that and really means it,' Marian replied encouragingly, 'I believe in the end he can always win the girl he has set his heart upon.'

'But I suppose you know,' Edward interrupted, 'that her father has already made up his mind that she's to marry a cousin of hers at Pimento Valley, a planter in the island, and has announced the fact publicly to half Trinidad?'

'Not Mr. Tom Dupuy?' Harry cried in amazement.

'Yes, Tom Dupuy—the very man. Then you've met him already?'

'He lunched with us to-day at Orange Grove!' Harry answered, puckering his brow a little. 'And her father actually wants her to marry that fellow! By Jove, what a desecration!'

'Then you don't like what you've seen so far of Mr. Tom?' Marian asked with a smile.

Harry rose and leaned against the piazza pillar with his hands behind him. 'The man's a cad,' he answered briefly.

'If we were in Piccadilly again,' Edward Hawthorn said quietly, 'I should say that was probably a piece of pure class prejudice, Noel; but as we are in Trinidad, and as I happen to know Mr. Tom Dupuy by two or three pieces of personal adventure, I don't mind telling you in strict confidence, I cordially agree with you.'

'Ah!' Harry Noel cried with much amusement, clapping him heartily on his broad shoulder. 'So coming to Trinidad has knocked some of that radical humbug and nonsense clean out of you, has it, Teddy? I

knew it would, my dear fellow; I knew you'd get rid of it!'

'On the contrary, Mr. Noel,' Marian answered with quiet dignity, 'I think it has really made us a great deal more confirmed in our own opinions than we were to begin with. We have suffered a great deal ourselves, you know, since we came to Trinidad.'

Harry flushed in the face a little. 'You needn't tell me all about it, Mrs. Hawthorn,' he said uneasily. 'I've heard something about the matter already from the two Dupuys, and all I can say is, I never heard such a foolish, ridiculous, nonsensical, cock-and-bull prejudice as the one they told me about, in the whole course of my precious existence. If it hadn't been for Nora's sake—I mean for Miss Dupuy's'—and he checked

himself suddenly—'upon my word, I really think I should have knocked the fellow down in his uncle's dining-room the very first moment he began to speak about it.'

'Mr. Noel,' Marian said, 'I know how absurd it appears to you, but you can't imagine how much Edward and I have suffered about it since we've been in this island.'

'I can,' Harry answered. 'I can understand it easily. I had a specimen of it myself from those fellows at lunch this morning. I kept as calm as I could outwardly; but, by Jove, Mrs. Hawthorn, it made my blood boil over within me to hear the way they spoke of your husband.—Upon my soul, if it weren't for—for Miss Dupuy,' he added thoughtfully, 'I wouldn't stop now a single night to accept

that man's hospitality another minute after the way he spoke about you.'

'No, no; do stop,' Marian answered simply. 'We want you so much to marry Nora; and we want to save her from that horrid man her father has chosen for her.'

And then they began unburdening their hearts to Harry Noel with the long arrears of twelve months' continuous confidences. It was such a relief to get a little fresh external sympathy, to be able to talk about it all to somebody just come from England, and entirely free from the merest taint of West Indian prejudice. They told Harry everything, without reserve; and Harry listened, growing more and more indignant every minute, to the long story of petty slights and undeserved insults. At last he could

restrain his wrath no longer. 'It's preposterous,' he cried, walking up and down the piazza angrily, by way of giving vent to his suppressed emotion; 'it's abominable! it's outrageous! it's not to be borne with! The idea of these people, these hole-and-corner nobodies, these miserable, stupid, ignorant noodles, with no more education or manners than an English ploughboy—O yes, my dear fellow, I know what they are—I've seen them in Barbadoes—setting themselves up to be better than you are—there, upon my word I've really no patience with it. I shall kick some of them soundly, some day, before I've done with them; I know I shall. I can't avoid it. But what on earth can have induced you to stop here, my dear Teddy, when you might have gone back again comfortably to England, and have mixed pro-

perly in the sort of society you're naturally fitted for?'

'I did,' Marian answered firmly; 'I induced him, Mr. Noel. I wouldn't let him run away from these miserable people. And besides, you know, he's been able to do such a lot of good here. All the negroes love him dearly, because he's protected them from so much injustice. He's the most popular man in the island with the black people; he's been so good to them, and so useful to them, and such a help against the planters, who are always trying their hardest to oppress them. And isn't that something worth staying for, in spite of everything?'

Harry Noel paused and hesitated. 'Tastes differ, Mrs. Hawthorn,' he answered more soberly. 'For my part, I can't say I feel myself very profoundly interested in the

eternal nigger question; though, if a man feels it's his duty to stop and see the thing out to the bitter end, why, of course he ought in that case to stop and see it. But what does rile me is the idea that these wretched Dupuy people should venture to talk in the way they do about such a fellow as your husband—confound them!'

Tea interrupted his flow of indignation.

But when Harry Noel had ridden away again towards Orange Grove on Mr. Dupuy's pony, Edward Hawthorn and his wife stood looking at one another in dubious silence for a few minutes. Neither of them liked to utter the thought that had been uppermost in both their minds at once from the first moment they saw him in Trinidad.

At last Edward broke the ominous still-

ness. 'Harry Noel's awfully dark, isn't he, Marian?' he said uneasily.

'Very,' Marian answered in as unconcerned a voice as she could well summon up. 'And so extremely handsome, too, Edward,' she added after a moment's faint pause, as if to turn the current of the conversation.

Neither of them had ever observed in England how exceedingly olive-coloured Harry Noel's complexion really was—in England, to be as dark as a gipsy is of no importance; but now in Trinidad, girt round by all that curiously suspicious and genealogically inquiring society, they couldn't help noticing to themselves what a very dark skin and what curly hair he happened to have inherited.

'And his mother's a Barbadian lady,'

Edward went on uncomfortably, pretending to play with a book and a paper-knife.

'She is,' Marian answered, hardly daring to look up at her husband's face in her natural confusion. 'He—he always seems so very fond of his mother, Edward, darling.'

Edward went on cutting the pages of his newly-arrived magazine in grim silence for a few minutes longer; then he said: 'I wish to goodness he could get engaged and married offhand to Nora Dupuy very soon, Marian, and then clear out at once and for ever from this detestable island as quickly as possible.'

'It would be better if he could, perhaps,' Marian answered, sighing deeply. 'Poor dear Nora! I wish she'd take him. She could never be happy with that horrid Dupuy man.'

They didn't dare to speak, one to the other, the doubt that was agitating them;

but they both agreed in that half-unspoken fashion that it would be well if Harry pressed his suit soon, before any sudden thunderbolt had time to fall unexpectedly upon his head and mar his chance with poor little Nora.

As Harry Noel rode back to Orange Grove alone, along the level bridle-path, he chanced to drop his short riding-whip at a turn of the road by a broad cane-piece. A tall negro was hoeing vigorously among the luxuriant rows of cane close by. Harry Noel called out to him carelessly, as he would have done to a labourer at home: 'Here you, hi, sir, come and pick up my whip, will you!'

The tall negro turned and stared at him. 'Who you callin' to come an' pick up your whip, me fren'?' he answered somewhat savagely.

Harry Noel glanced back at the man with an angry glare. 'You!' he said, pointing with an imperious gesture to the whip on the ground. 'I called you to pick it up for me. Don't you understand English? Eh! Tell me?'

'You is rude gentleman for true,' the old negro responded quietly, continuing his task of hoeing in the cane-piece, without any attempt to pick up the whip for the unrecognised stranger. 'If you want de whip picked up, what for you doan't speak to naygur decently? Ole-time folk has proverb, "Please am a good dog, an' him keep doan't cost nuffin'." Get down yourself, sah, an' pick up your own whip for you-self if you want him.'

Harry was just on the point of dismounting and following the old negro's advice, with

some remote idea of applying the whip immediately after to the back of his adviser, when a younger black man, stepping out hastily from behind a row of canes that had hitherto concealed him, took up the whip and handed it back to him with a respectful salutation. The old man looked on disdainfully while Harry took it; then, as the rider went on with a parting angry glance, he muttered sulkily: 'Who dat man dat you gib de whip to? An' what for you want to gib it him dere, Peter?'

The younger man answered apologetically: 'Dat Mr. Noel, buckra from Englan'; him come to stop at Orange Grove along ob de massa.'

'Buckra from Englan'!' Louis Delgado cried incredulously. 'Him doan't no buckra from Englan', I tellin' you, me brudder; him

Trinidad brown man as sure as de gospel. You doan't see him is brown man, Peter, de minnit you look at him?'

Peter shook his head and grinned solemnly. 'No, Mistah Delgado, him doan't no brown man,' he answered laughing. 'Him is dark for true, but still him real buckra. Him stoppin' up at house along ob de massa!'

Delgado turned to his work once more, doggedly. 'If him buckra, an' if him stoppin' up wit dem cursed Dupuy,' he said half aloud, but so that the wondering Peter could easily overhear it, 'when de great an' terrible day ob de Lard come, he will be cut off wit all de household, as de Lard spake in de times ob old by de mout of him holy prophet. An' de day ob de Lard doan't gwine to be delayed long now, neider.' A mumbled Arabic sentence, which Peter of course could not

understand, gave point and terror to this last horribly mouthed prediction. Peter turned away, thinking to himself that Louis Delgado was a terrible obeah man and sorcerer for certain, and that whoever crossed his path had better think twice before he offended so powerful an antagonist.

Meanwhile, Harry Noel was still riding on to Orange Grove. As he reached the garden gate, Tom Dupuy met him, out for a walk in the cool of the evening with big Slot, his great Cuban bloodhound. As Harry drew near, Slot burst away suddenly with a leap from his master, and before Harry could foresee what was going to happen, the huge brute had sprung up at him fiercely, and was attacking him with his mighty teeth and paws, as though about to drag him from his seat forcibly with his slobbering canines.

Harry hit out at the beast a vicious blow from the butt-end of his riding-whip, and at the same moment Tom Dupuy, sauntering up somewhat more lazily than politeness or even common humanity perhaps demanded, caught the dog steadily by the neck and held him back by main force, still struggling vehemently and pulling at the collar. His great slobbering jaws opened hungrily towards the angry Englishman, and his eyes gleamed with the fierce light of a starving carnivore in sight and smell of his natural prey.

'Precious vicious dog you keep, Mr. Dupuy,' Harry exclaimed, not over good-humouredly, for the brute had made its teeth meet through the flap of his coat lappets: 'you oughtn't to let him go at large, I fancy.'

Tom Dupuy stooped and patted his huge

favourite lovingly on the head with very little hypocritical show of penitence or apology. 'He don't often go off this way,' he answered coolly. 'He's a Cuban bloodhound, Slot is; pure-blooded—the same kind we used to train in the good old days to hunt up the runaway niggers; and they often go at a black man or a brown man—that's what they're meant for. The moment they smell African blood, they're after it like a greyhound after a hare, as quick as lightning. But I never knew Slot before go for a white man! It's very singular—excessively singular. I never before knew him go for a real white man.'

'If he was my dog,' Harry Noel answered, walking his pony up to the door with a sharp look-out on the ugly mouth of the straining and quivering bloodhound, 'he'd never have the chance again, I can tell you, to go for

another. The brute's most dangerous—a most bloodthirsty creature. And indeed, I'm not sentimental myself on the matter of niggers; but I don't know that in a country where there are so many niggers knocking about casually everywhere, any man has got a right to keep a dog that darts straight at them as a greyhound darts at a hare, according to your very own confession. It doesn't seem to me exactly right or proper somehow.'

Tom Dupuy glanced carelessly at the struggling brute, and answered with a coarse laugh: 'I see, Mr. Noel, you've been taking counsel already with your friend Hawthorn. Well, well, in my opinion, I expect there's just about a pair of you!'

CHAPTER XXVII.

In spite of his vigorous dislike for Tom Dupuy, Harry Noel continued to stop on at Orange Grove for some weeks together, retained there irresistibly by the potent spell of Nora's presence. He could not tear himself away from Nora. And Nora, too, though she could never conquer her instinctive prejudice against the dark young Englishman—a prejudice that seemed to be almost ingrained in her very nature—couldn't help feeling on her side, also, that it was very pleasant to have Harry Noel stopping in the house with her; he was such a relief and change after Tom Dupuy and

the other sugar-growing young gentlemen of Trinidad. He had some other ideas in his head beside vacuum pans and saccharometers and centrifugals; he could talk about something else besides the crop and the cutting and the boiling. Harry was careful not to recur for the present to the subject of their last conversation at Southampton; he left that important issue aside for a while, till Nora had time to make his acquaintance for herself afresh. A year had passed since she came to Trinidad; she might have changed her mind meanwhile. At nineteen or twenty, one's views often undergo a rapid expansion. In any case, it would be best to let her have a little time to get to know him better. In his own heart, Harry Noel had inklings of a certain not wholly unbecoming consciousness that he cut a very decent figure indeed in

Nora's eyes, by the side of the awkward, sugar-growing young men of Trinidad.

One afternoon, a week or two later, he was out riding among the plains with Nora, attended behind by the negro groom, when they happened to pass the same corner where he had already met Louis Delgado. The old man was standing there again, cutlass in hand—the cutlass is the common agricultural implement and rural jack-of-all-trades of the West Indies, answering to plough, harrow, hoe, spade, reaping-hook, rake, and pruning-knife in England—and as Nora passed he dropped her a grudging, half-satirical salutation, something between a bow and a courtesy, as is the primitive custom of the country.

'A very murderous-looking weapon, the thing that fellow's got in his hand,' Harry Noel said, in passing, to his pretty companion

as they turned the corner. 'What on earth does he want to do with it, I wonder?'

'Oh, that!' Nora exclaimed carelessly, glancing back in an unconcerned fashion. 'That's only a cutlass. All our people work with cutlasses, you know. He's merely going to hoe up the canes with it.'

'Nasty things for the niggers to have in their hands, in case there should ever be any row in the island,' Harry murmured half aloud; for the sight of the wild-looking old man ran strangely in his head, and he couldn't help thinking to himself how much damage could easily be done by a sturdy negro with one of those rude and formidable weapons.

'Yes,' Nora answered with a childish laugh those are just what they always hack us to pieces with, you know, whenever there comes a negro rising. Mr. Hawthorn says

there's very likely to be one soon. He thinks the negroes are ripe for rebellion. He knows more about them than anyone else, you see; and he's thoroughly in the confidence of a great many of them, and he says they're almost all fearfully disaffected. That old man Delgado there, in particular—he's a shocking old man altogether. He hates papa and Tom Dupuy; and I believe if ever he got the chance, he'd cut every one of our throats in cold blood as soon as look at us.'

'I hope to Heaven he won't get the chance, then,' Harry ejaculated earnestly. 'He seems a most uncivil, ill-conditioned, independent sort of a fellow altogether. I dropped my whip on the road by chance the very first afternoon I came here, and I asked this same man to pick it up for me; and, would you believe it, the old wretch wouldn't stoop to hand the thing to me;

he told me I might just jump off my horse and pick it up for myself, if I wanted to get it! Now, you know, a labourer in England, though he's a white man like one's self, would never have dared to answer me that way. He'd have stooped down and picked it up instinctively, the moment he was asked to by any gentleman.'

'Mr. Hawthorn says,' Nora answered smiling, 'that our negroes here are a great deal more independent, and have a great deal more sense of freedom than English country-people, because they were emancipated straight off all in one day, and were told at once: "Now, from this time forth you're every bit as free as your masters;" whereas the English peasants, he says, were never regularly emancipated at all, but only slowly and unconsciously came out of serfdom, so that there never was any

one day when they felt to themselves that they had become freemen. I'm not quite sure whether that's exactly how he puts it, but I think it is. Anyhow, I know it's a fact that all one's negro women-servants out here are a great deal more independent and saucy than the white maids used to be over in England.'

'Independence,' Harry remarked, cracking his short whip with a sharp snap, 'is a very noble quality, considered in the abstract; but when it comes to taking it in the concrete, I should much prefer for my part not to have it in my own servants.'

(A sentiment, it may be observed in passing, by no means uncommon, even when not expressed, among people who make far more pretensions to democratic feeling than did Harry Noel.)

Louis Delgado, standing behind, and gazing with a malevolent gleam in his cold dark eyes after the retreating buckra figures, beckoned in silence with his skinny hand to the black groom, who came back immediately and unhesitatingly, as if in prompt obedience to some superior officer.

'You is number forty-tree, I tink,' the old man said, looking at the groom closely. 'Yes, yes, dat's your number. Tell me; you know who is dis buckra from Englan'?'

'Dem callin' him Mistah Noel, sah,' the black groom answered, touching the brim of his hat respectfully.

'Yes, yes, I know him name; I know dat already,' Delgado answered with an impatient gesture. 'But what I want to know is jest dis—can you find out for me from de house-serbants, or anybody up at Orange Grove,

where him fader an' mudder come from? I want to know all about him.'

'Missy Rosina find dat out for me,' the groom answered, grinning broadly. 'Missy Rosina is de young le-ady's waiting-maid; an' de young le-ady, him tell Rosina pretty well eberyting. Rosina, she is Isaac Pourtalès' new sweetheart.'

Delgado nodded in instantaneous acquiescence. 'All right, number forty-tree,' he answered, cutting him short carelessly. 'Ride after buckra, an' say no more about it. I get it all out ob him now, surely. I know Missy Rosina well, for true. I gib him de lub of Isaac Pourtalès wit me obeah, I tellin' you. Send Missy Rosina to me dis ebenin'. I has plenty ting I want to talk about wit her.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

That evening, Rosina Fleming went as she was bid to the old African's tent about half-past eleven, groping her way along the black moonless roads in fear and trembling, with infinite terror of the all-pervading and utterly ghastly West Indian ghosts or duppies. It was a fearful thing to go at that time of night to the hut of an obeah man; Heaven knows what grinning, gibbering ghouls and phantoms one might chance to come across in such a place at such an hour. But it would have been more fearful still to stop away: for Delgado, who could so easily bring her Isaac Pourtalès

for a lover by his powerful spells, could just as easily burn her to powder with his thunder and lightning, or send the awful duppies to torment her in her bed, as she lay awake trembling through the night-watches. So poor Rosina groped her way fearfully round to Delgado's hut with wild misgivings, and lifted the latch with quivering fingers, when she heard its owner's gruff, 'Come in den, missy,' echoing grimly from the inner recesses.

When she opened the door, however, she was somewhat relieved to find within a paraffin lamp burning brightly; and in the place of ghouls or ghosts or duppies, Isaac Pourtalès himself, jauntily seated smoking a fresh tobacco-leaf cigarette of his own manufacture, in the corner of the hut where Louis Delgado was sitting cross-legged on the mud floor.

'Ebenin', missy,' Delgado said, rising with African politeness to greet her; while the brown Barbadian, without moving from his seat, allowed his lady-love to stoop down of herself to kiss him affectionately. 'I send for you dis ebenin' becase we want to know suffin' about dis pusson dat callin' himself buckra, an' stoppin' now at Orange Grobe wit you. What you know about him, tell us dat, missy. You is Missy Dupuy own serbin'-le-ady: him gwine to tell you all him secret. What you know about dis pusson Noel?'

Thus adjured, Rosina Fleming, sitting down awkwardly on the side of the rude wooden settee, and with her big white eyes fixed abstractedly upon the grinning skull that decorated the bare mud wall just opposite her, pulled her turban straight upon her woolly locks with coquettish precision, and

sticking one finger up to her mouth like a country child, began to pour forth all she could remember of the Orange Grove servants' gossip about Harry Noel. Delgado listened impatiently to the long recital without ever for a moment trying to interrupt her; for long experience had taught him the lesson that little was to be got out of his fellow-countrywomen by deliberate cross-questioning, but a great deal by allowing them quietly to tell their own stories at full length in their own rambling, childish fashion.

At last, when Rosina, with eyes kept always timidly askance, half the time upon the frightful skull, and half the time on Isaac Pourtalès, had fairly come to the end of her tether, the old African ventured, with tentative cunning, to put a leading question: 'You ebber hear dem say at de table, missy, who

him mudder and fader is, and where dem come from?'

'Him fader is very great gentleman ober in Englan',' Rosina answered confidently—'very grand gentleman, wit house an' serbant, an' coach an' horses, an' plenty cane-piece, an' rum an' sugar, an' yam garden an' plantain, becase I 'member Aunt Clemmy say so; an' de missy him say so himself too, sah. An' de missy say dat de pusson dat marry him will be real le-ady—same like de gubbernor le-ady; real le-ady, like dem hab in Englan'. De missy tellin' me all about him dis bery ebenin'.'

Delgado smiled. 'Den de missy in lub wit him himself, for certain,' he answered with true African shrewdness and cynicism. 'Ole-time folk has proverb, "When naygur woman say, 'Dat fowl fat,' him gwine to steal him

same ebenin' for him pickany dinner." An' when le-ady tell you what happen to gal dat marry gentleman, him want to hab de gentleman himself for him own husband.'

'O no, sah; dat doan't so,' Rosina cried with sudden energy. 'De missy doan't lubbin' de buckra gentleman at all. She tell me him look altogedder too much like naygur.'

Delgado and Pourtalès exchanged meaning looks with one another, but neither of them answered a word to Rosina.

'An' him mudder?' Delgado inquired curiously after a moment's pause, taking a lazy puff at a cigarette which Isaac handed him.

'Him mudder!' Rosina said. 'Ah, dere now, I forgettin' clean what Uncle 'Zekiel, him what is butler up to de house dar, an' hear dem talk wit one anodder at dinner—I for-

gettin' clean what it was him tell me about him mudder.'

Delgado did not urge her to rack her feeble little memory on this important question, but waited silently, with consummate prudence, till she should think of it herself and come out with it spontaneously.

'Ha, dere now,' Rosina cried at last, after a minute or two of vacant and steady staring at the orbless eyeholes of the skull opposite; 'I is too chupid—too chupid altogedder. Mistah 'Zekiel, him tellin' me de odder marnin' dat Mistah Noel's mudder is le-ady from Barbadoes.—Dat whar you come from yourself, Isaac, me fren'. You must be 'memberin' de family ober in Barbadoes.'

'How dem call de family?' Isaac asked cautiously. 'You ebber hear, Rosie, how dem call de family? Tell me, dar is

good girl, an' I gwine to lub you better'n ebber.'

Rosina hesitated, and cudgelled her poor brains eagerly a few minutes longer; then another happy flash of recollection came across her suddenly like an inspiration, and she cried out in a joyous tone: 'Yes, yes; I got him now, I got him now, Isaac! Him mudder family, deir name is Budleigh, an' dem lib at place dem call de Wilderness. Mistah 'Zekiel tell me all about dem. Him say dat dis le-ady, what him name Missy Budleigh, marry de buckra gentleman fader, what him name Sir-waltah Noel.'

It was an enormous and unprecedented fetch of memory for a pure-blooded black woman, and Rosina Fleming was justly proud of it. She stood there grinning and smiling from ear to ear, so that even the skull upon

the wall opposite was simply nowhere in the competition.

Delgado turned breathlessly to Isaac Pourtalès. 'You know dis fam'ly?' he asked with eager anticipation. 'You ebber hear ob dem? You larn at all whedder dem is buckra or only brown people?'

Isaac Pourtalès laughed hoarsely. Brown man as he was himself, he chuckled and hugged himself with sardonic delight over the anticipated humiliation of a fellow brown man who thought himself a genuine buckra. 'Know dem, sah!' he cried in a perfect ecstasy of malicious humour—'know de Budleighs ob de Wilderness! I tink for true I know dem! *Hé!* Mistah Delgado, me fren', I tellin' you de trut, sah; me own mudder an' Mrs. Budleigh ob de Wilderness is first-cousin, first-cousin to one anudder.'

It was perfectly true. Strange as such a relationship sounds to English ears, in the West Indies cases of the sort are as common as earthquakes. In many a cultivated light-brown family, where the young ladies of the household, pretty and well educated, expect and hope to marry an English officer of good connections, the visitor knows that, in some small room or other of the back premises, there still lingers on feebly an old black hag, wrinkled and toothless, full of strange oaths and incomprehensible African jargons, who is nevertheless the grandmother of the proud and handsome girls, busy over Mendelssohn's sonatas and the *Saturday Review*, in the front drawing-room. Into such a family it was that Sir Walter Noel, head of the great Lincolnshire house, had actually married. The Budleighs of the

Wilderness had migrated to England before the abolition of slavery, when the future Lady Noel was still a baby; and getting easily into good society in London, had only been known as West Indian proprietors in those old days when to be a West Indian proprietor was still equivalent to wealth and prosperity, not, as now, to poverty and bankruptcy.

Strange to say, too, Lady Noel herself was not by any means so dark as her son Harry. The Lincolnshire Noels belonged themselves to the black-haired type so common in their county; and the union of the two strains had produced in Harry a complexion several degrees more swarthy than that of either of his handsome parents. In England, nobody would ever have noticed this little peculiarity; they merely said that

Harry was the very image of the old Noel family portraits; but in Trinidad, where the abiding traces of negro blood are so familiarly known and so carefully looked for, it was almost impossible for him to pass a single day without his partially black descent being immediately suspected. He had 'thrown back,' as the colonists coarsely phrase it, to the dusky complexion of his quadroon ancestors.

Louis Delgado hugged himself and grinned at this glorious discovery. 'Ha, ha!' he cried, rocking himself rapidly to and fro in a perfect frenzy of gratified vindictiveness; 'him doan't buckra, den!—him doan't buckra! He hold himself so proud, an' look down on naygur; an' after all, him doan't buckra, him only brown man! De Lard be praise, I gwine to humble him! I gwine to let him know him doan't buckra!'

'You will tell him?' Rosina Fleming asked curiously.

Delgado danced about the hut in a wild ecstasy, with his fingers snapping about in every direction, like the half-tamed African savage that he really was. 'Tell *him*, Missy Rosie!' he echoed contemptuously—'tell *him*, you sayin' to me! Yah, yah! you hab no sense, missy. I doan't gwine to tell *him*, for certain; I gwine to tell dat cheatin' scoundrel, Tom Dupuy, missy, so humble him in de end de wuss for all dat.'

Rosina gazed at him in puzzled bewilderment. 'Tom Dupuy!' she repeated slowly. 'You gwine to tell Tom Dupuy, you say, Mistah Delgado? What de debbel de use, I wonder, sah, ob tell Tom Dupuy dat de buckra gentleman an' Isaac is own cousin?'

Delgado executed another frantic *pas de*

seul across the floor of the hut, to work off his mad excitement, and then answered gleefully: 'Ha, ha, Missy Rosie, you is woman, you is creole naygur gal—you doan't understand de depth an' de wisdom ob African naygur. Look you here, me fren', I explain you all about it. De missy up at house, him fall in lub wid dis brown man, Noel. Tom Dupuy, him want for go an' marry de missy. Dat make Tom Dupuy hate de brown man. I tell him, Noel doan't no buckra—him common brown man, own cousin to Isaac Pourtalès. Den Tom Dupuy laugh at Noel! Ha, ha! I turn de hand ob one proud buckra to bring down de pride ob de odder!

Isaac Pourtalès laughed too. 'Ha, ha!' he cried, 'him is proud buckra, an' him is me own cousin! Ha, ha, I hate him! When de great an' terrible day ob de Lard

come, I gwine to hack him into little bit, same like one hack de pinguin in de hedge when we breakin' fence down to grub up de boundaries!'

Rosina gazed at her mulatto lover in rueful silence. She liked the English stranger —he had given her a shilling one day to post a letter for him—but still, she daren't go back upon Isaac and Louis Delgado. 'Him is fren' ob Mistah Hawtorn,' she murmured apologetically at last after a minute's severe reflection—'great fren' ob Mistah Hawtorn. Dem is old-time fren' in Englan' togedder; and when Mistah Tom Dupuy speak bad 'bout Mistah Hawtorn, Mistah Noel him flare up like angry naygur, an' him gib him de lie, an' him speak out well for him!'

Delgado checked himself, and looked closely at the hesitating negress with more

deliberation. 'Him is fren' ob Mistah Hawtorn,' he said in a meditative voice—'him is fren' ob Mistah Hawtorn! De fren' ob de Lard's fren' shall come to no harm when de great an' terrible day ob de Lard comin'. I gwine to tell Tom Dupuy. I must humble de buckra. But in de great an' terrible day, dem shall not hurt a hair of him head, if de Lard wills it.' And then he added somewhat louder, in his own sonorous and mystic Arabic ; 'The effendi's brother is dear to Allah even as the good effendi himself is.'

Isaac Pourtalès made a wry face aside to himself. Evidently he had settled in his own mind that whatever might be Delgado's private opinion about the friends of the Lord's friend, he himself was not going to be bound, when the moment for action actually arrived, by anybody else's ideas or promises.

By-and-by, Rosina rose to go. 'You is comin' wit me, Isaac?' she asked coquettishly, with her finger stuck once more in coy reserve at the corner of her mouth, and her head a little on one side, bewitching negress fashion.

Isaac hesitated; it does not do for a brown man to be too condescending and familiar with a nigger girl, even if she does happen to be his sweetheart. Besides, Delgado signed to him with his withered finger that he wanted him to stop a few minutes longer. 'No, Missy Rosie,' the mulatto answered, yawning quietly; 'I doan't gwine yet. You know de road to house, I tink. Ebenin', le-ady.'

Rosina gave a sighing, sidelong look of disappointed affection, took her lover's hand a little coldly in her own black fingers, and

sidled out of the hut with much reluctance, half-frightened still at the horrid prospect of once more facing alone the irrepressible and ubiquitous duppies.

As soon as she was fairly out of earshot, Louis Delgado approached at once close to the mulatto's ear and murmured in a mysterious hollow undertone: 'Next Wednesday!'

The mulatto started. 'So soon as dat!' he cried. 'Den you has got de pistols?'

Delgado, with his wrinkled finger placed upon his lip, moved stealthily to a corner of his hut, and slowly opened a chest, occupied on the top by his mouldy obeah mummery of loose alligators' teeth and well-cleaned little human knuckle-bones. Carefully removing this superstitious rubbish from the top of the box with an undisguised sneer—for Isaac as a

brown man was *ex officio* superior to obeah—he took from beneath it a couple of dozen old navy pistols, of a disused pattern, bought cheap from a marine store-dealer of doubtful honesty down at the harbour. Isaac's eyes gleamed brightly as soon as he saw the goodly array of real firearms. '*Hé, hé!*' he cried joyously, fingering the triggers with a loving touch, 'dat de ting to bring down de pride ob de proud buckra. Ha, ha! Next Wednesday, next Wednesday! We waited long, Mistah Delgado, for de Lard's delibberance; but de time come now, de time come at last, sah, an' we gwine to hab de island ob Trinidad all to ourselves for de Lard's inheritance.'

The old African bowed majestically. 'Slay ebbery male among dem,' he answered aloud in his deepest accents, with a not wholly unimpressive mouthing of his hollow

vowels—' slay ebbery male, sait' de Lard by de mout' ob de holy prophet, an' take de women captive, an' de maidens, an' de little ones; an' divide among you de spoil ob all deir cattle, an' all deir flocks, an' all deir goods, an' deir cities wherein dey dwell, and all deir vineyards, an' deir goodly castles.'

Isaac Pourtalès' eyes gleamed hideously as he listened in delight to that awful quotation from the Book of Numbers. 'Ha, ha,' he cried, ' "take de women captive!" De Lard say dat? De Lard say dat, now? Ha, ha, Mistah Delgado! dat is good prophecy, dat is fine prophecy; de prophet say well, "take de women captive."'

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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